Ο ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΠΑΡΑΤΗΡΗΤΗΣ

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THE ORTHODOX OBSERVER

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In birth-giving thou didst preserve thy virginity, in thy falling asleep thou hast not forsaken the world, O Birth-giver of God: Thou hast passed away into life, thou who art the Mother of Life, and by thy prayers thou deliverest our souls from death.

Troparion

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The Theotokos sleepeth not in her intercessions and she is the unfailing hope of protection. The grave and death could not retain her; for, He that dwelt in her ever-virginal womb hath presented her, as the Mother of life, unto life.

Kondakion

From: "Faith of Our Fathers"
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G.O.Y.A. The Hope for the Future of Our Church

FIFTH NATIONAL G.O.Y.A. CONFERENCE (August 25 – 31)

By REV. KALLISTOS SAMARAS

THE G.O.Y.A. Chapter of the Greek Cathedral of Boston will be host to the many Goyans and their friends at the Fifth National Conference of the Greek Orthodox Youth of America which will take place in Boston, Massachusetts, August 25-31. This will be the first conference to take place since Minneapolis in 1954, as the conference was postponed last year because of the polio epidemic in Boston.

The host chapter with the assistance of all the Greater Boston chapters have prepared a program of events for the delegates as well as visiting friends and relatives.

The Greek Orthodox Youth have dedicated their organization to the perpetuation of their religious heritage. Their main purpose is to strengthen the ties that bind them to the religion, to understand more fully the truths of their faith, and the important role which the Greek Orthodox Church played in the development of our civilization and culture. Towards this end, many programs have been prepared and presented effectively amongst the younger element of our faithful. Through the efforts of G.O.Y.A. a new interest has sprung up within the ranks of our youth in their Orthodox Faith, and what was at one time merely a hope and a prayer that the Greek Orthodox Church had set a firm foothold in this country, has proved to be a reality.

Knowing that the difficult work lies ahead, and that our youth must be prepared to meet the challenge of the future, the Greek Orthodox Youth of America meets annually in national and district conferences, in order to discuss problems of the youth and of their Church, always seeking a solution to these problems, and new ways of entrenching the Faith in its new surroundings.

This is the goal of the National Conference to take place this August in Boston. A well-rounded religious program has been prepared as a supplement to the discussions to take place during the general assemblies. The week's programming includes Vespers on Saturday evening, the 25th of August, at the Church of St. John the Baptist in Boston, followed by Confessions at St. John's and at the Cathedral. On Sunday morning, the Divine Liturgy, with His Grace, Bishop Athenagoras, officiating, will be sung at the Cathedral. In the afternoon, a Religious Forum will take place on the grounds of the Theological School in Brookline, with Bishop Athenagoras and a number of clergy sitting in the panel.

A religious workshop on each day of the conference will explore the following topics of vital interest to our youth: "Death and Immortality," "The Neglected Sacrament — Confession," "How to Pray," "The Divine Liturgy," "The Administrative Structure of the Church," "The Role of Holy Tradition," "The Schism of the West," "The Seven Ecumenical Councils," "The World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Patriarchate."

In addition, committees will study and report on ways and means by which the youth can assist the Church in the problems which face it, such as the Sunday School and the Greek School, the Dekadollarion, the Institutions of the Archdiocese, such as the Theological School and the Academy of St. Basil.

For visiting friends and relatives there will be tours of the historic sites of the Boston area, fashion shows for the ladies and summer theatre. All are invited to the Grand Banquet, the "Orchid Ball" and many other events on the lighter side.

These are but a few of the highlights of the conference. It is the sincere hope of the Conference Committee and the host Chapters that all Goyans will avail themselves of the opportunity to participate in the conference. We know they will leave with a new spirit of understanding of their Church and the determination to work even harder for the propagation of their Faith.

"AGAPE" has been chosen as the theme of this year's National Conference, as explained by St. Paul in I Corinthians 13:1-13:

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I have become a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. . . . And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Address of His Eminence Archbishop Michael To The Fifth Annual Conference of G.O.Y.A.

ON the occasion of the commencement of your Fifth Annual Conference, may I first express the hope that the spirit of God enlighten you and that, as in your previous conferences, you may now also make the soundest possible decisions for the good of your organization and generally of our beloved fellow Greek-Americans and the Greek Orthodox Church in this country.

Secondly, I should like to make a few comments with respect to the motto of your organization, "Live Your Orthodox Faith," which you selected by yourselves during the Fourth Annual Conference in Minneapolis.

"Live Your Orthodox Faith." I think there are two aspects to this splendid motto of G.O.Y.A. We live our Orthodox Faith when we are faithful to the dogmas and generally to the teachings and traditions of our Orthodox Church. It is not possible for us to call ourselves Orthodox if we are not faithful to the dogmatic teachings of the Orthodox Church. We must believe and we must worship God exactly as the Church teaches. It is the duty of every Orthodox Christian, for example, to keep the dogmas of the Church as they were postulated by the seven ecumenical synods of the first centuries of Christendom, and by the various local synods whose proceedings were confirmed by ecumenical synods.

In these dogmatic truths are encompassed our faith in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, as well as our faith in the all-holy Mother of God and our veneration of holy icons and holy relics. In these dogmatic truths are included the teachings of the Church as to the seven sacraments of the Holy Orthodox Church. And above all, these dogmatic truths must include all those things our Orthodox Church teaches regarding the four obligatory sacraments, that is, Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion, and Confession and Penance. We cannot believe that we are real members of the Church and that we live our Orthodox Faith if we are not baptized and chrismated, if at least four times each year we do not receive Holy Communion and go to confession; nor can we contend that we are real members of the Church and that we live our Orthodox Faith if we do not go to Church each Sunday unless there is an inevitable obstacle to this, such as sickness or the fact that we are traveling. There is no business, not even of the most urgent variety, that a Christian may use as the pretext for neglecting his obligation to go to Church on Sunday. And this is so because while church-going is, of course, a need of our inner person, it is especially a demonstration of our love, our respect and our worship for our heavenly common Father and God, for all those things He does for us through granting us the gift of His Divine Providence, and above everything else, through having sent us His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem us from the guilt of sin and to save us by His sacrifice upon the cross.

And Jesus Christ, our Lord, has told us that the first great commandment is "Love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and all thy heart and all thy might and all thy mind, and love thy neighbor as thyself."

Therefore, if we are not ill and if we are not traveling, yet we neglect our duty to go to Church on Sundays, then this means that we have not the right to feel we are truly living our Orthodox Faith.

But besides the dogmatic truths we have, we also have as you know the moral truths. These moral truths of the Orthodox Church are included in the Decalogue and in the Sermon on the Mount of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We must pay particular attention to this point. Many are very strict with themselves and with others when it comes to the dogmatic truths of the Church, and yet it seems that they do not give any great attention also to the moral truths and principles of the Christian religion. Speaking for instance of the matter of church-going, and even about Communion, they will criticize unreservedly those who do not go to Church. They pay no attention, however, to the matter of sex, for example, or to card playing, or to excessive use of liquor, or to their participation in games of chance which frequently destroy them and even those about them.

Many times as I think about these questions I ask myself, "I wonder who is more guilty, he who contravenes the dogmatic teachings of the Church, or he who tramples on the moral principles of Christianity?" In the first instance we have, of course, the heretics, as we characterize those who do not agree with our dogmatic teachings. But are they also not heretics those who ignore the moral teachings of the same Orthodox Church? Does not the Orthodox catechism comprise two parts, the dogmatic and the moral? Do not these two parts constitute the

(Continued on page 172)

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EDITOR:
EMM. HATZIEMMANUEL

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(Continued from page 171)

two legs on which the Orthodox Christian supports himself? Therefore, should not even those who violate the moral principles of Christianity be considered to be heretics? The first are dogmatic heretics; the second are moral heretics. Which shall we prefer? In other words, who shall we say is less of a heretic?

On this subject we could think along the following lines, too. The dogmatic truths of the Church resemble the spinal column and the rest of the skeletal structure of the human organism; and the moral truths are its flesh and its blood and its nerves. To the life of the human organism, not only the spinal column and the rest of the skeleton are absolutely necessary, but also the flesh and the blood and the nervous system. The human organism cannot possibly live without the one or the other. Man is not made of bones alone, nor of flesh alone. But it takes flesh and bone to provide the two elements we absolutely must have to live.

Someone might say to me, though, "You have forgotten the soul." To this I would answer, No, I have not forgotten. Because in the picture I portray to you the soul symbolizes the life-giving grace of God who alone makes it possible for us to be the keepers of the dogmatic truths and creators of the moral principles of Christianity.

And just as the human being can not but be dead if it does not possess the life-giving eternal soul, along with its bones and its flesh, so also if we are to live practically and truly our Orthodox Faith it is not enough for us to keep — even if it be strictly, precisely — the dogmatic and moral truths of the Church. But what we need to have is Divine Grace, that power which shall join us with Jesus Christ, the Giver of true life, the Giver of spiritual life as we say. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life," says John the Evangelist in his First Epistle General.

Therefore, so that we may be Orthodox and so that we may live truly our Orthodox Faith, we have the obligation to be faithful not only to the dogmatic but to the moral truths of our Orthodox Church as well. When we make this endeavor sincerely and through our inner selves, then there is visited upon us, then there is assured us the grace of God which is so utterly indispensable to the cultivation of sipiritual life within us.

My dear spiritual children. The progress thus far of our beloved G.O.Y.A. has been most encouraging. This is attributable, of course, to the enthusiasm manifested by all of you who comprise the organization. It is attributable especially to the National Councils you have chosen until now and particularly to the inspired and genuinely Christian life and work of the two chairmen G.O.Y.A. has had thus far — Ernest Villas and Andrew Vance. The former was a major factor in the strengthening of G.O..YA. in its first steps, while the second was no less important in advancing this progress along the lines which were laid out by the four national conferences of your organization to date.

Do not think for a moment, however, that the future of G.O.Y..A is already assured — for many times in such movements as this the enthusiasm diminishes as it gives way to human vanity and weakness, which cause it to wither and then to die.

And there is only one possible way by which this may be forestalled. You must see to it that the leadership of your organization consists of people who have been reborn spiritually and who confess and live the always new, the always living, the always powerful, the always same yesterday and today and through the ages to come, Jesus Christ. Thus shall there be the hope and the certainty that G.O.Y.A. will continue its beneficial progress, growing stronger each and every day, moving from one success to the other — for the welfare of all our Greek-American brethren and of our beloved Greek Orthodox Church in America.

Ο ΜΗΝ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑΣ

Ὑπὸ τοῦ Σεβ. Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κου ΜΙΧΑΗΛ

ΑΝΕΚΑΘΕΝ ὁ εὐσεβὴς Ἑλληνικὸς Ὀρθόδοξος λαὸς ἐθεώρει τὸν μῆνα Αὔγουστον, ὡς τὸν κατ' ἐξοχὴν ἀφιερωμένον εἰς τὴν Παναγίαν Μητέρα τοῦ Θεανθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Διότι ἀκριβῶς εἰς τὸ μέσον τοῦ μηνὸς ἑορτάζεται ὑπὸ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἡ μεγαλειτέρα καὶ ἐνδοξοτέρα ἑορτὴ τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου, ἡ Κοίμησις Αὐτῆς καί, κατὰ παράδοσιν πολιάν, ἀρχαιοτάτην, ἀποστολικήν, ἡ εἰς οὐρανοὺς μετάστασις Αὐτῆς. Περισσοτέρας τῆς μιᾶς ἑορτὰς ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας ἔχει ἀφιερωμένας εἰς τὴν Παναγίαν Μητέρα τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἐξ ὅλων τῶν λοιπῶν Ἁγίων εἷς μόνον ἔχει τὸ προνόμιον αὐτό: ὁ μνημονευόμενος, κατὰ τὴν ἀπόλυσιν τῶν ἱερῶν ἀκολουθιῶν, μετὰ τὴν Ὑπεραγίαν Θεοτόκον, ὁ Πρόδρομος καὶ Βαπτιστὴς τοῦ Σωτῆρος Ἰωάννης. Καὶ τοῦτο διότι ἀμφότεραι αἱ ἅγιαι αὐταὶ προσωπικότητες ὑπούργησαν, ὅσον οὐδεὶς ἄλλος ἐκ τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς ἀνθρώπων, εἰς τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἐνσαρκώσεως τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ Λόγου τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τῆς δι' Αὐτοῦ σωτηρίας τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Ἡ ἀειπάρθενος Μαρία ὑπῆρξε τὸ κατ' ἐξοχὴν ὄργανον τῆς ἐνσαρκώσεως τοῦ Σωτῆρος. Ἠξιώθη, ἄνθρωπος αὖτη κοινός, φέρων τοῦ προπατορικοῦ ἁμαρτήματος τὸ βάρος, νὰ βαστάσῃ τὸν βαστάζοντα πάντα ἐν τῇ γαστρὶ αὐτῆς, καὶ νὰ δώσῃ εἰς Αὐτὸν τὴν σάρκα καὶ τὸ αἷμα της διὰ νὰ ἐμφανισθῇ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ὁ ἀπεριόριστος καὶ ἄπειρος ὡς ἄνθρωπος πεπερασμένος, ἔχων ὅλας τὰς ἀνθρωπίνους ἰδιότητας, ἐκτὸς τῆς εὐπεριστάτου ἁμαρτίας, τῆς τάσεως καὶ τῆς ἕλξεως πρὸς τὸ κακόν. Ὁ δὲ μείζων ἐν γεννητοῖς γυναικῶν, Βαπτιστὴς καὶ Πρόδρομος Ἰωάννης, κατὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Αὐτοῦ τοῦ Θεανθρώπου, ὑπῆρξε τὸ κορύφωμα τῆς πρὸ Χριστοῦ ἀρετῆς καὶ ἁγιότητος, ἐκεῖνος ὅστις ἔτι ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τῆς μητρός του Ἐλισάβετ εὑρισκόμενος, ἐσκίρτησεν ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει ἐπὶ τῇ προσεγγίσει τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου, ποὺ μετὰ τὸν Εὐαγγελισμὸν πλήρης τοῦ Παναγίου Πνεύματος ἔφερεν ἐντὸς αὐτῆς τὸν Σωτῆρα τοῦ Κόσμου.

Δὲν πιστεύομεν ἡμεῖς οἱ Ὀρθόδοξοι εἰς ἀσπίλους συλλήψεις καὶ θεοποιήσεις καὶ μαριολατρικὰς ὑπερβολάς, ποὺ ἀντὶ νὰ συντελοῦν εἰς τὴν τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου, μᾶλλον τὴν ὑποτιμοῦν καὶ τὴν ὑποβιβάζουν. Διότι, ἁπλούστατα, τὴν δογματικήν μας πίστιν καὶ εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς Παναγίας, τὴν στηρίζομεν εἰς τὴν Ἁγίαν Γραφὴν καὶ τὴν Ἱερὰν Παράδοσιν. Ἀμφότεραι δὲ αἱ πηγαὶ αὗται τῆς δογματικῆς διδασκαλίας μας δὲν περιέχουν οὔτε νύξιν, οὔτε περὶ ἀσπίλου συλλήψεως τῆς Θεοτόκου, οὔτε περὶ μαριολατρείας. Ἀμφότεραι αἱ ἱεραὶ αὐταὶ πηγαὶ θέλουν τὴν Παναγίαν Μητέρα τοῦ Θεοῦ, κόρην ἁπλῆν, γεμάτην ἀπὸ ταπείνωσιν, ἀγνότητα, καὶ πίστιν ἀφελεστάτην, παιδικὴν εἰς τὰς θείας βουλὰς καὶ ἐντολάς. «Ἰδοὺ ἡ δούλη Κυρίου, γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα σου», εἶναι λόγοι ἀπὸ τοὺς ἐλαχίστους, ποὺ περιέχει ἡ Καινὴ Διαθήκη, καὶ ποὺ ἀνήκουν εἰς τὴν ταπεινὴν καὶ ὀλιγόλογον Μαρίαν. Λόγοι, ποὺ ἐκδηλώνουν τὴν ἀφελῆ, τὴν παιδικήν, τὴν πηγαίαν πίστιν αὐτῆς εἰς τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸ θέλημα. Πίστιν, ποὺ διεπότιζε καὶ κατεπλημμύρει ὁλόκληρον τὴν ὕπαρξίν της καὶ

Ἡ Παναγία ἐν μέσῳ Ἀρχαγγέλων
Φορητὴ εἰκὼν ΙΣΤ΄ αἰῶνος (Μουσεῖον Μπενάκη).

ἐξεδηλώνετο μὲ τοὺς ποικίλους της χρωματισμοὺς εἰς τὴν καθημερινὴν ζωὴν τῆς Παναγίας, ὡς ἀγάπη, ἐλπίς, ταπείνωσις, ἀγνότης, ἐνδόμυχος καὶ ἀστείρευτος χαρά· ἢ ἐξεδηλώνετο, ἡ πίστις αὕτη ἡ ὁλόψυχος καὶ ἡ ἐγκάρδιος, ὅπως λέγει ὁ Ἀπόστολος Παῦλος, ὡς ἀγάπη, χαρά, εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία, χρηστότης, ἀγαθωσύνη, πραότης καὶ ἐγκράτεια. Τὸ κρύσταλλον τὸ ἀπαστράπτον καὶ τὸ πεντακάθαρον ἦτο ὁ ἐσωτερικὸς ἄνθρωπος τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου. Ἡ δὲ Θεία χάρις, ποὺ ἦτο πάντοτε μετ' αὐτῆς καὶ ἰδιαιτέρως μετὰ τὸν Εὐαγγελισμόν της καὶ ἦτο ὁ φορεὺς καὶ ὁ συντηρητὴς καὶ ὁ πολλαπλασιαστὴς τῆς πίστεώς της, ἦτο ἡ γεννήτρια τῶν πολλῶν, τῶν μεγάλων, τῶν ποικίλων, τῶν μοναδικῶν της ἀρετῶν. Τοιουτοτρόπως ἡμεῖς οἱ Ὀρθόδοξοι φανταζόμεθα καὶ πιστεύομεν καὶ ἐννοοῦμεν τὴν Παναγίαν Μητέρα τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ὡς ἄνθρωπον ἁπλοῦν, ἁγνὸν καὶ ταπεινόν, πιστεύοντα εἰς τὸν Θεὸν καὶ τὰς Θείας Του βουλάς· ὡς ἄνθρωπον, ποὺ ἕνεκα ἀκριβῶς αὐτῶν τῶν ἀρετῶν του, εἵλκυσε τὴν εὔνοιαν, τὴν χάριν, τὴν δύναμιν καὶ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἔφθασεν εἰς τὸ κατακόρυφον τῆς ἁγιότητος ἀξιωθεῖσα νὰ βαστάσῃ, ὅπως εἴπομεν, τὸν βαστάζοντα πάντα. Κανὲν ἀνθρώπινον ὂν δὲν ἠξιώθη τῆς ἐκτάκτου, τῆς ἀνεκφράστου, τῆς πραγματικῶς μόνης καὶ μοναδικῆς αὐτῆς τιμῆς καὶ δόξης· διότι καὶ κανὲν ἀνθρώπινον ὂν δὲν ἠξιώθη νὰ φθάσῃ εἰς τὸ ὕψος τῶν ἀρετῶν τῆς τιμιωτέρας τῶν Χερουβὶμ καὶ ἐνδοξοτέρας ἀσυγκρίτως τῶν Σεραφείμ. Εἰς τοῦτο ἀκριβῶς ἔγκειται τὸ μεγαλεῖον τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Μητρὸς τοῦ Θεανθρώπου· ὅτι κατώρθωσεν ὑπὸ τὸ βάρος τοῦ προπατορικοῦ ἁμαρτήματος νὰ φθάσῃ μέχρι τῆς ὑπερευλογημένης στιγμῆς τοῦ Εὐαγγελισμοῦ, μὴ ἔχουσα σπῖλον ἢ ρυτίδα, ἀλλ' ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος, καὶ νὰ ἀξιωθῇ κατὰ τὸν Εὐαγγελισμὸν νὰ καθαρθῇ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ προπατορικοῦ ἁμαρτήματος, μὲ τὴν ἐπέλευσιν ἐπ' αὐτῆς τοῦ Παναγίου Πνεύματος. Ὅπερ σημαίνει ὅτι ὅπως ἐκείνη, τοιουτοτρόπως καὶ ἡμεῖς, καὶ κάθε ἄνθρωπος Χριστιανός, εἶναι δυνατόν, μὲ τὴν πίστιν μας, ἐκδηλουμένην ἐμπράκτως εἰς τὴν καθημερινὴν ζωήν μας, νὰ ἐλκύσωμεν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν εὐδοκίαν καὶ τὴν εὔνοιαν, νὰ γίνωμεν δοχεῖα τῆς Χάριτός Του καὶ νὰ μείνωμεν ἀπρόσβλητοι ἀπὸ τὴν εὐπερίστατον ἁμαρτίαν, ὅσον εἶναι δυνατὸν εἰς ἄνθρωπον σάρκα καὶ αἷμα περιβεβλημένον καὶ τὸν κόσμον τοῦτον, ποὺ κεῖται ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, κατοικοῦντα.

Αὐτὸν τὸν μῆνα Αὔγουστον, ἐφέτος, ἔχει ἡ φέρελπίς μας νεολαία τὸ πέμπτον Ἐθνικὸν Συνέδριόν της ἐν Βοστώνῃ. Τὸ ἔμβλημά της δέ, ὅπως ἡ ἰδία τὸ καθώρισεν, εἶναι: «Ζῆτε τὴν Ὀρθόδοξόν σας Πίστιν». Ποίαν πίστιν; Τὴν πίστιν ὅπως τὴν ἠσθάνθη καὶ τὴν ἔζησεν ἡ Ὑπεραγία Θεοτόκος. Τὴν πίστιν, ποὺ διαποτίζει καὶ καταπλημμυρεῖ τὴν ὕπαρξίν μας καὶ ἐκδηλώνεται εἰς τὴν καθημερινὴν ζωήν μας ὡς χαρά, εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία, χρηστότης, ἀγαθωσύνη, πραότης, ἐγκράτεια, καὶ παρουσιάζει τὸν ἄνθρωπον προσωπικότητα ὁλοκληρωμένην, ἤτοι προσανατολισμένην πρὸς τὸν Δημιουργὸν καὶ τὸν Σωτῆρα της, ὀντότητα πραγματικῶς καὶ ἀληθῶς πνευματικήν, ποὺ εἶναι δοχεῖον τοῦ Παναγίου Πνεύματος. Ἂς ἔχουν, ὅμως, ὑπ' ὄψιν οἱ νέοι καὶ αἱ νεάνιδές μας, ὅτι αὐτὸ τὸ εὐγενέστατον, τὸ τιμαλφέστατον ἰδεῶδες ἐπιτυγχάνεται ὄχι μὲ συμβιβασμοὺς περὶ τὴν ἠθικὴν καὶ τὴν δογματικὴν διδασκαλίαν, ὄχι δηλονότι μὲ νοθείας, ὅπως σήμερον, δυστυχῶς, ἐννοεῖ ὁ κόσμος τὴν θρησκείαν — ἀλλὰ μὲ θέλησιν σταθερὰν ὅπως ὁμολογήσωμεν τὸν Χριστόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ζήσωμεν Αὐτόν, ὅπως ὀρθοδοξῶμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὀρθοπρακτῶμεν, ὅπως πιστεύσωμεν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μας καὶ ἐκδηλώνωμεν ἐμπράκτως τὴν πίστιν μας μὲ τὰς ἀρετὰς ποὺ ἀπαριθμεῖ ὁ θεῖος Παῦλος εἰς τὴν πρὸς Γαλάτας ἐπιστολὴν (ε'. 22-23).

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ

ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΙΚΟΝ ΚΟΛΛΕΓΙΟΝ
ΑΚΑΔΗΜΙΑΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ

Ἤρχισαν αἱ ἐγγραφαὶ εἰς τὸ Διδασκαλικὸν Κολλέγιον τῆς Ἀκαδημίας τοῦ Ἁγίου Βασιλείου.

Εἰς τὸ τμῆμα αὐτὸ γίνονται δεκταὶ ἀπόφοιτοι Ἀμερικανικῶν καὶ Ἑλληνικῶν Γυμνασίων.

Ἡ φοίτησις εἶναι τριετής.

Αἱ ἀπόφοιτοι τοῦ Διδασκαλικοῦ Κολλεγίου διορίζονται Διδασκάλισσαι, Γραμματεῖς Κοινοτήτων καὶ Διευθύντριαι Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Χορῳδιῶν.

Ἡ ζήτησις ἀποφοίτων τοῦ Διδασκαλικοῦ Κολλεγίου εἶναι μεγάλη καὶ αἱ ἀμοιβαὶ πολὺ ἱκανοποιητικαί.

Οἱ Ἱερεῖς, οἱ Πρόεδροι, οἱ Σύμβουλοι καὶ γενικῶς πάντες οἱ ἐνδιαφερόμενοι νὰ κρατήσουν ἀνοικτὰ τὰ Ἑλληνικὰ Σχολεῖα, ἐνδιαφέρονται ζωηρῶς νὰ ἀποστείλουν εἰς τὸ Ἵδρυμα αὐτὸ Νέας πρὸς φοίτησιν.

Τὸ Διδασκαλικὸν Κολλέγιον παρέχει, πράγματι, μοναδικὴν εὐκαιρίαν εἰς τὰς ἀποφοίτους τῶν Γυμνασίων μας νὰ εὑρύνουν τὰς σπουδάς των καὶ νὰ γίνουν πνευματικὰ καὶ ἡγετικὰ στελέχη τῶν Ἑλληνορθοδόξων Κοινοτήτων μας.

Διὰ περισσοτέρας πληροφορίας ἀπευθυνθῆτε εἰς:

ST. BASIL'S ACADEMY
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ΑΝΑΓΚΗ ΑΝΑΖΩΟΓΟΝΗΣΕΩΣ ΤΟΥ ΕΝΘΟΥΣΙΑΣΜΟΥ ΤΩΝ ΝΕΩΝ ΜΑΣ

Ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοφιλ. Ἐπισκόπου Νύσσης
Κου ΓΕΡΜΑΝΟΥ

ΤΑΞΕΙΔΕΥΩΝ συνεχῶς ἐδῶ καὶ ἐκεῖ εἰς τὰς 47 Κοινότητας τῶν Νοτίων Πολιτειῶν τῆς ἀπεράντου αὐτῆς καὶ φιλοξένου Χώρας μας, μὲ πολλὴν χαρὰν ἔρχομαι καθημέραν εἰς τακτικὴν ἐπαφὴν μὲ τοὺς ἀγαπητοὺς νέους καὶ νέας μας, ποὺ σχεδὸν ὅλοι ἔχουν γεννηθῇ ἐδῶ. Τί νὰ σᾶς πῶ; Ἂν σᾶς πῶ πὼς εἶμαι τελείως εὐχαριστημένος, θὰ γελάσω τὸν ἑαυτόν μου καὶ θὰ κολακεύσω ἢ θὰ γελάσω ἴσως τοὺς ἀναγνώστας τοῦ καλοῦ αὐτοῦ περιοδικοῦ.

Δὲν πρέπει ἴσως ἕνας Κληρικὸς νὰ εἶναι 100% εὐχαριστημένος καὶ ἱκανοποιημένος ἀπὸ τοὺς νέους του, διότι τότε θὰ ἀνακοπῇ ἴσως ἡ πρὸς τὰ ἐμπρὸς ἐργασία τοῦ ἰδίου καὶ τοῦ ποιμνίου του. Ἂν εἶναι κανεὶς εὐχαριστημένος καθ' ὅλα, ὑπάρχει τότε φόβος νὰ μείνῃ εἰς τὸ σημεῖον, ποὺ εὑρίσκετο καὶ ἄλλοτε, καὶ αὐτὸ δὲν εἶναι καλόν. Τὰ σημειωτὰ βήματα δὲν ἔχουν πέρασιν εἰς τὴν γλῶσσαν τῆς προόδου. Ὅποιος δὲν βαδίζει μίαν ἴντσαν πρὸς τὰ ἐμπρός, θὰ βαδίσῃ ἀσφαλῶς μίαν ἴντσαν πρὸς τὰ ὀπίσω.

«Πρόβλημα Νέων» ὑπῆρχε πάντοτε. Καὶ «Πρόβλημα Νέων» θὰ ὑπάρχῃ πάντοτε. Χιλιάδες νέων περνοῦν τὰ ὡραιότερα χρόνια των εἰς μίαν ἠθικὴν καὶ πνευματικὴν στασιμότητα μὲ ἓν συναίσθημα κατωτερότητος (Inferiority Complex), διότι δὲν ἐκτιμοῦν ἴσως τὴν ἀξίαν των δεόντως. Φθείρουν τὰ σώματά των προσπαθοῦντες νὰ εὕρουν ἱκανοποιήσεις καὶ τέρψεις παραδόξους ἐδῶ καὶ ἐκεῖ, εἰς τὰ ποτά, εἰς τὰ χαρτιὰ κ.τ.λ. Καταστρέφουν τὸν ἑαυτόν των διότι δὲν θέλουν νὰ μάθουν πῶς νὰ κοντρολάρουν τὰς πλανωμένας ὁρμάς των. Διαπράττουν τοῦτ' αὐτὸ πνευματικὴν αὐτοκτονίαν, διότι δὲν θέλουν νὰ κατανοήσουν ὅτι εἶναι «βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους ἠλαττωμένοι» καὶ ἔχουν ὡς ἐκ τούτου εὐθύνας ἱεράς.

Εἰς τὰ πρῶτα-πρῶτα ἐδάφια τοῦ Βιβλίου τοῦ Δανιήλ, τῆς Παλαιᾶς Διαθήκης, βλέπει κανεὶς μίαν ὡραίαν γραμμὴν περὶ τοῦ νέου ἐκείνου, ὁ ὁποῖος «ἔβαλεν ἐν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ καρδίᾳ ἵνα μὴ μιανθῇ» ("he would not defile himself"). Ἔπειτα ἀπὸ μερικὰ χρόνια ὁ νέος ἐκεῖνος εἶχεν ἀποκτήσει δόξαν καὶ δύναμιν καὶ ἐξήσκησεν ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην. Ἀλλὰ ὅλα αὐτὰ εἶχον τὴν ἀρχήν των εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην, κατὰ τὴν ὁποίαν εἶχε βάλλει εἰς τὸν νοῦν του νὰ θέσῃ τὸν ἑαυτόν του ὑπὸ πειθαρχίαν. Ἡ γραμμὴ αὐτὴ θὰ ἔπρεπε νὰ μελετηθῇ καλὰ ἀπὸ ὅλους ἐκείνους, οἱ ὁποῖοι θέλουν νὰ ἐπιτύχουν εἰς οἱονδήποτε πεδίον τῆς ζωῆς. «Δανιὴλ ἔβαλεν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ του νὰ μὴ μιανθῇ». Εἰς τὴν γραμμὴν αὐτὴν ἔχομεν τὴν ἐξήγησιν ἑνὸς καταπληκτικοῦ σταδίου.

«Θέλω νὰ ζήσω τὴν ζωήν μου», μοῦ ἔλεγε προχθὲς ἀκόμη ἕνας νέος μας. Νομίζουν, δηλαδή, οἱ νέοι μας ὅτι ἡ Θρησκεία περιορίζει ἢ καταργεῖ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν των, ὅτι ἀποκλείει τὴν φαιδρότητα, ὅτι εἶναι πολὺ αὐστηρά, ὅτι εἶναι ἐμπόδιον εἰς τὸν δρόμον των. Κατ' αὐτὸν τὸν τρόπον σκέπτονται ἀτυχῶς πολλοὶ νέοι ἔστω καὶ ἂν δὲν τὸ λέγουν. Θεωροῦν τὴν Θρησκείαν ὡς κάτι τὸ ὁποῖον περιορίζει τὴν ἀνεξαρτησίαν των καὶ δεσμεύει τὴν «περίφημον» ἐλευθερίαν των. Τὴν σέβονται, εἶναι ἡ ἀλήθεια, τὴν Θρησκείαν οἱ Ἑλληνοαμερικανοὶ νέοι μας, εὑρίσκονται εἰς σχέσεις καλὰς μαζύ της, ἀλλὰ δὲν ἀπεφάσισαν νὰ τὴν γνωρίσουν, νὰ τὴν μελετήσουν, προσεκτικώτερον, διὰ νὰ τὴν ἀγαπήσουν καὶ περισσότερον. Δὲν ἀγαπᾷ κανεὶς βαθειὰ κάτι ἂν δὲν τὸ γνωρίσῃ καλὰ-καλὰ πρῶτον. Αἱ γνώσεις τὰς ὁποίας ἐπῆραν ἀπὸ τὴν μητέρα των ἢ ἀπὸ τὸ Κατηχητικὸν Σχολεῖον ἦσαν ὀλίγαι καὶ ἐλησμονήθησαν καὶ αὐταὶ μὲ τὸ πέρασμα τοῦ καιροῦ, διότι ὅταν συνεχῶς καὶ ἀφθόνως δὲν ἐξετάζῃ κανεὶς κάτι τὸ ξεχνᾷ γρήγορα.

Μία ἄλλη πρᾶξις, ποὺ βλάπτει πολλοὺς νέους μας σήμερον, τοὺς νέους τοῦ Σάουθ, τοὺς ὁποίους καὶ ἔχω ὑπ' ὄψει, εἶναι ὅτι δὲν φροντίζουν νὰ συνεχίσουν πιστὰ τὸ Ἑλληνοαμερικανορθόδοξον περιβάλλον εἰς τὸ ὁποῖον ηὐδοκίμησαν καὶ ἐπέτυχον οἱ γονεῖς των καὶ εἰς τὸ ὁποῖον ἐγαλουχήθησαν καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ ἴδιοι εἰς τὰ μικρά των χρόνια. Οἱ Μικτοὶ Γάμοι μεταξὺ αὐτῶν εἶναι πολλοὶ κατ' ἀναλογίαν, ἴσως καὶ 26%. Εἶναι ὅμως γνωστόν, ὅτι: The family that prays together, stays together. Σήμερον ὅλαι αἱ Ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀμερικῆς, ὅλων τῶν Δογμάτων, ἐλεύθερα κάμνουν μίαν διαφωτιστικὴν ἐκστρατείαν μεταξὺ τῶν μελῶν των, παροτρύνουσαι αὐτὰ νὰ λαμβάνουν ὁμόζυγον ἀπὸ τὴν ἰδίαν θρησκείαν, ἀπὸ τὰς ἰδίας παραδόσεις. Αὐτὸ τὸ σημεῖον πολλοὶ τῶν νέων καὶ νεανίδων μας δὲν θέλουν νὰ τὸ ἐννοήσουν βαθειὰ καὶ τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα εἶναι διπλοῦν: ὑποφέρουν κρυφὰ οἱ περισσότεροι ἀπὸ αὐτοὺς καί, σὺν τῷ χρόνῳ, ἀραιώνονται καὶ τὰ Ἑλληνορθόδοξα ἀνδρόγυνα ἐν Ἀμερικῇ, πρᾶγμα τὸ ὁποῖον θὰ ἀδυνατίσῃ πολὺ τὴν ἐν Ἀμερικῇ Ἑλληνορθοδοξίαν.

Ἐξ ἄλλου, λείπει ὁ ἐνθουσιασμός. Καὶ αὐτὸς εἶναι ἴσως ὁ λόγος, ποὺ βλέπει κανεὶς ἔπειτα ἀπὸ πέντε χρόνια, ποὺ ὠργανώθη ἡ Γκόγια, νὰ μὴ ἔχῃ αὐξηθῇ τόσον

G.O.Y.A. -- ΜΕΣΟΝ ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ ΤΩΝ ΝΕΩΝ ΜΑΣ

Ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοφιλ. Ἐπισκόπου Ὀλύμπου
Κου ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ

ΜΕ ἐλπίδας καὶ πολὺ τὸ ἐνδιαφέρον ὁλόκληρος ἡ ὁμογένεια στρέφει τὰ βλέμματά της κατὰ τὰς ἡμέρας αὐτὰς εἰς τὴν πόλιν τῆς Βοστώνης, ὅπου συνέρχεται τὸ Ἐθνικὸν Συνέδριον τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Ἑλληνοαμερικανικῆς Νεολαίας τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Βορείου καὶ Νοτίου. Καὶ πολὺ δικαίως. Διότι τὸ μέλλον τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας ἀνήκει εἰς αὐτούς. Οἱ νέοι μας θὰ ἀναλάβουν νὰ συνεχίσουν τὸ ἔργον, τὸ ὁποῖον οἱ πατέρες μας ἐθεμελίωσαν εἰς τὴν χώραν μας ταύτην. Αὐτοὶ εἶναι οἱ φυσικοὶ κληρονόμοι καὶ οἱ θεματοφύλακες τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου ἡμῶν πίστεως καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν αὐτῆς παραδόσεων.

Κατὰ συνέπειαν εἶναι δικαιολογημένη ἡ ἀγωνία τῶν πρωτοπόρων μας, μὲ τὴν ὁποίαν θέτουν τὸ ἐρώτημα: Τὰ παιδιά μας θὰ συνεχίσουν νὰ δεικνύουν τὸ ἐνδιαφέρον ἡμῶν τῶν παλαιῶν διὰ τὴν Ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν μας, τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν μας καὶ τὰ ἱδρύματά της; Θὰ διατηρήσουν ὅ,τι ἡμεῖς ἐδημιουργήσαμεν; Διὰ νὰ ἀπαντήσῃ τις εἰς τὸ ἐρώτημα αὐτό, πρέπει νὰ πῇ στὸν ἑαυτό του: Ἄραγε ἡμεῖς οἱ πρωτοπόροι δεικνύομεν ὅσον πρέπει ἐνδιαφέρον, ὥστε νὰ διαφωτίσωμεν καὶ διδάξωμεν τοὺς νέους τὰς ὑποχρεώσεις των ἀπέναντι τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου ἡμῶν Ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῶν παραδόσεών μας; Δὲν ὑπάρχει οὐδεμία ἀμφιβολία, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες μας ἔκαμον πάρα πολλὰ μὲ θυσίας καὶ κόπους πολλούς. Ἑκάστη Ἑλληνορθόδοξος Κοινότης εἰς τὴν χώραν ταύτην εἶναι διαπρύσιος κήρυξ τῶν ὅσα ἔκαμον οἱ πατέρες μας. Ἱεροὶ Ναοὶ μεγαλοπρεπεῖς καὶ Κοινοτικαὶ αἴθουσαι εὐρύχωροι στολίζουν ὅλας τὰς Κοινότητάς μας. Καὶ ἐξακολουθοῦν μὲ ἐνδιαφέρον νὰ συντηροῦν τὰ ἱδρύματα αὐτά. Ἀλλὰ δὲν εἶναι τοῦτο μόνον ἀρκετόν. Παραλλήλως πρὸς ὅ,τι ἔγινε χρειάζεται ἡ συνεχὴς μέριμνα τῆς διαφωτίσεως τῆς νέας μας γενεᾶς καὶ τῆς καταλλήλου διδασκαλίας ὡς πρὸς τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὰς παραδόσεις μας. Οὕτω θὰ γνωρίσουν οἱ νέοι τὴν Ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν, θὰ ἐμβαθύνουν εἰς τὸν πνευματικόν της πλοῦτον, θὰ γνωρίσουν τί ὑπηρεσίας προσέφερεν ἡ Ὀρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία εἰς τὸν πολιτισμὸν καὶ θὰ κατανοήσουν τὰς πρὸς αὐτὴν ὑποχρεώσεις των.

Τὴν ἀνάγκην ταύτην ἦλθε νὰ πληρώσῃ ἡ ἵδρυσις τῆς G.O.Y.A. Ὁ Σεβασμιώτατος Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀντελήφθη τὴν ἀνάγκην ταύτην, δηλαδὴ τὴν ὀργάνωσιν τῆς Ἑλληνοαμερικανικῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Νεολαίας ὑπὸ τὰς πτέρυγας τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, διὰ νὰ γνωρίσῃ ὅσον θὰ ἔπρεπε τὸ ἐνδιαφέρον τῶν μελῶν της ἔξω ἀπὸ τὰ ἐτήσια συνέδριά της, τὰ περιφερειακὰ καὶ τὸ Γενικόν. Ἐπῆγα τελευταίως εἰς μίαν Κοινότητα ὑποτιθεμένην μεταξὺ τῶν μεγάλων εἰς πληθυσμὸν ὁμογενῆ. Ὅταν παρεκάλεσα τὸν πρόεδρον τῆς τοπικῆς Γκόγια, ἕνα θαυμάσιον 25ετῆ νέον, νὰ καλέσῃ γενικὴν συνεδρίαν διὰ νὰ ὁμιλήσω, ὡς πάντοτε, εἰς τὰ μέλη της, μοῦ εἶπε: «Δεσπότη μου, ἡ Γκόγια ἐδῶ εἶναι under dissolution». Εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν Κοινότητα πέρυσι καὶ εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν Γκόγια εἶδα περισσότερα μέλη καὶ προπέρυσιν ἀκόμη περισσότερα. Ἐφέτος μόλις εἴχομεν ὀκτὼ ἕως δέκα νέους ἄνω τῶν 20 ἐτῶν. Τὸ ἄλλο ἀκροατήριον ἀπετελεῖτο ἀπὸ παιδιὰ κάτω τῶν 13 ἐτῶν, τὰ ὁποῖα θὰ ἦλθαν διὰ νὰ δοῦν τί θὰ πῇ ὁ Δεσπότης, ἀπὸ περιέργειαν. Σημειωτέον ὅτι ἡ Κοινότης ἐκείνη ἀπὸ διετίας ἔχει νεαρὸν Ἱερέα.

Δὲν ὑπάρχει, δηλαδή, τὸ ἐνθουσιαστικὸν στοιχεῖον τόσον ἴσως ἀπὸ μέρους ἡμῶν τῶν ποιμένων ὅσον καὶ ἀπὸ μέρους μερικῶν νέων, οἱ ὁποῖοι θέλουν νὰ εὑρίσκουν εἰς τὴν Γκόγια ἓν σωματεῖον διασκεδάσεων καὶ τέρψεων προσωρινῶν καὶ ὄχι μίαν Θρησκευτικὴν Ὀργάνωσιν, ἡ ὁποία ζητεῖ καὶ ὑγιειᾶ ψυχαγωγίαν νὰ δώσῃ καὶ θρησκευτικὰς ἐμπνεύσεις νὰ ἀναπτύξῃ γύρω ἀπὸ τὴν Ὀρθόδοξον Ἐκκλησίαν καὶ τὴν Ἱερὰν Ἀρχιεπισκοπήν μας.

Ἐνδέχεται αἱ ἀνωτέρω πέντε σκέψεις μου νὰ παρεξηγηθοῦν. Γνωρίζω ὅτι οἱ ἐνδιαφερόμενοι νέοι θέλουν τοὺς γράφοντας ἢ ὁμιλοῦντας, νὰ γράφουν ἢ νὰ ὁμιλοῦν εὐχάριστα, «πρὸς ἡδονὴν δημηγορεῖν», κατὰ τὸ ἀρχαῖον. Ἀλλὰ αἰσθάνομαι τὴν ἀνάγκην νὰ τονίσω τὰ ὡς ἄνω πράγματα. Καὶ πρὸ παντὸς αἰσθάνομαι τὴν ἀνάγκην νὰ παρακαλέσω θερμὰ νὰ μὴ ἀνακοπῇ τελείως ὁ ἐνθουσιασμός, τὸν ὁποῖον πρὸ πενταετίας, κατὰ τὰ πρῶτα-πρῶτα χρόνια τῆς Ὀργανώσεως, παρετηρήσαμεν. Θὰ εἶναι ὀδυνηρὸν τὸ κτύπημα, ποὺ θὰ δοθῇ εἰς ὅλους μας ἐὰν ἀνακοπῇ τὸ βαθὺ ἐνδιαφέρον ἢ μᾶλλον ἐὰν δὲν μεγαλώσῃ τοῦτο εἰς τὰ μέλη καὶ τοὺς ἀξιωματούχους τῆς προσφιλοῦς Γκόγια. Ἂς ἐλπίσωμεν, ἂς βοηθήσωμεν, ἂς προσευχηθῶμεν ὅλοι, ὥστε ἀπὸ τὸ μετ' ὀλίγον Ἐθνικὸν Συνέδριον τῆς Γκόγια βγῇ κάτι καλὸν καὶ κάτι διαρκές.

ρίση αὐτὴν καλλίτερον, νὰ τὴν αἰσθανθῇ βαθύτερον μέσα εἰς τὴν ψυχήν της καὶ οὕτω ἐνδιαφερθῇ αὕτη ζωηρότερον καὶ προπαρασκευασθῇ νὰ συνεχίσῃ τὸ ἔργον τῶν πατέρων της πρὸς ἐπιβίωσιν τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου ἡμῶν πίστεως καὶ τῶν παραδόσεών μας.

Μὲ ἱκανοποίησιν καὶ ἐνθουσιασμὸν οἱ νέοι μας ἐδέχθησαν τὴν ἵδρυσιν τῆς καθαρῶς θρησκευτικῆς ταύτης ὀργανώσεως. Διότι εἶναι ἀληθὲς οἱ νέοι μας διψοῦν νὰ μάθουν τὰ τῆς θρησκείας των, ἐνδιαφέρονται ἡ Ἐκκλησία των ἡ Ὀρθόδοξος νὰ καταλάβῃ ἐξέχουσαν θέσιν εἰς τὴν χώραν μας καὶ νὰ ὑπολογίζεται ὡς πνευματικὴ δύναμις τοὐλάχιστον ἰσάξιος μὲ τὰς ἄλλας μεγάλας ἐκκλησιαστικὰς ὁμάδας τῆς χώρας μας. Τὸ ρητὸν τὸ ὁποῖον ἔθεσαν ὡς σύνθημα τῆς ὀργανώσεώς των μαρτυρεῖ τὴν μεγάλην ταύτην ἐπιθυμίαν τῶν νέων μας «νὰ ζήσωμεν τὴν Ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν μας». Δὲν ἦτο δυνατὸν νὰ ἐξευρεθῇ ὡραιότερον σύνθημα διὰ τοὺς νέους μας, τὸ ὁποῖον ἐὰν ἐφαρμόσουν θὰ συντελέσουν θετικὰ εἰς τὸ νὰ λάβῃ ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἡ Ὀρθόδοξος τὴν ἐμπρέπουσαν αὐτῆς θέσιν. Καὶ πρὸς τὸ σημεῖον αὐτὸ ἂς στρέψουν τὰς ἐργασίας των εἰς τὸ ἐφετεινὸν ἐθνικόν των συνέδριον οἱ νέοι μας. Νὰ φροντίσουν νὰ λάβουν τὰς καταλλήλους ἀποφάσεις, αἱ ὁποῖαι ἐφαρμοζόμεναι ἀπὸ τὰ κατὰ τόπους τμήματα, νὰ κάμουν πραγματικότητα τὸ σύνθημά των, «νὰ ζήσωμεν τὴν Ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν μας».

Ὅπως ἀνεφέραμεν ἀνωτέρω ἡ ὀργάνωσις τῆς G.O.Y.A. εἶναι καθαρῶς θρησκευτικὴ ὀργάνωσις καὶ ὡς τοιαύτη ὀφείλει νὰ στρέψῃ τὴν προσοχήν της εἰς τὴν δημιουργίαν πνευματικῆς κινήσεως εἰς τὰ τμήματά της. Ἂς προσέξουν εἰς τὸ σημεῖον αὐτό, διότι, κατὰ τὴν γνώμην μας, εἶναι τὸ σπουδαιότερον καὶ ὁ πρώτιστος σκοπὸς τῆς G.O.Y.A. Μὲ μίαν τοιαύτην πνευματικὴν κίνησιν, ὑπὸ τὴν καθοδήγησιν τοῦ Σεβασμιωτάτου Ἀρχιεπισκόπου, τῶν Θεοφιλεστάτων Ἐπισκόπων καὶ τῶν Αἰδεσιμωτάτων Ἱερέων, θὰ ἐπιτευχθῇ ὁ σκοπὸς τῆς ὀργανώσεως καὶ θὰ γίνῃ πραγματικότης τὸ ὡραῖον σύνθημά της.

Εὐτυχῶς οἱ πλεῖστοι τῶν νέων μας οὕτω σκέπτονται καὶ οὕτως αἰσθάνονται. Ἂς μοῦ ἐπιτραπῇ εἰς τὸ σημεῖον αὐτὸ νὰ ἀναφέρω ἕνα παράδειγμα τῶν προσπαθειῶν καὶ τῶν σκέψεων τῶν νέων μας, ἐκ προσωπικῆς μου πείρας, ὡς πρὸς τὰς ὑποχρεώσεις των πρὸς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν μας καὶ τὴν ζωήν των κατὰ τὴν Ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν. Εἰς τὸ State of Montana ὑπάρχει μόνον μία Ἑλληνορθόδοξος Κοινότης, εἰς τὴν πόλιν Great Falls, ἡ ὁποία ἂν καὶ μικρὰ εἰς ἀριθμὸν πιστῶν, ὅμως διατηρεῖ ὡραῖον ναὸν καὶ αἴθουσαν. Ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινότητα ταύτην ἐξυπηρετοῦνται ὅλοι οἱ Ἑλληνορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί μας, οἱ ὁποῖοι εἶναι διασκορπισμένοι εἰς τὸ ἀπέραντον αὐτὸ State. Εἰς ἀπόστασιν 275 μιλίων τῆς πόλεως Great Falls εὑρίσκεται ἡ μικρὰ πόλις Missoula, εἰς τὴν ὁποίαν εἶναι ἐγκατεστημέναι περίπου 12 Ἑλληνορθόδοξοι οἰκογένειαι. Ὁσάκις μεταβαίνει ὁ ἱερεὺς ἐκ τῆς Κοινότητος Great Falls νὰ τελέσῃ τὴν Θείαν Λειτουργίαν ἢ ἄλλο ἱερὸν μυστήριον καταφεύγουν εἰς τὴν ἐξεύρεσιν αἰθούσης, ἡ ὁποία δὲν ἦτο πάντοτε καὶ ἡ κατάλληλος, λόγῳ τοῦ ὅτι ἡ πόλις εἶναι μικρά. Ἐδῶ τώρα παρουσιάζονται οἱ ὀλίγοι νέοι μας τῆς πόλεως ταύτης, οἱ ὁποῖοι δὲν ἱκανοποιοῦνται ἀπὸ τὴν κατάστασιν αὐτήν. «Δὲν αἰσθανόμεθα ὅτι εἴμεθα ἐν τάξει, Θεοφιλέστατε», μοῦ λέγουν ὅταν πρὸ ὀλίγου τοὺς ἐπεσκέφθην, «νὰ τελῶμεν τὰς ἀκολουθίας τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας εἰς αἰθούσας ἐδῶ καὶ ἐκεῖ». Καὶ δὲν χρονοτριβοῦν, συνεννοοῦνται καὶ ὅλοι νέοι καὶ νεάνιδες συνέρχονται εἰς σύσκεψιν καὶ ἀποφασίζουν νὰ ἐργασθοῦν ὅλοι καὶ νὰ καταβάλουν πᾶσαν δυνατὴν προσπάθειαν νὰ ἀποκτήσουν ἰδικόν των ναΐσκον καὶ ἰδικήν των αἴθουσαν. Καὶ κατώρθωσαν οἱ Ἑλληνορθόδοξοι νέοι τῆς Missoula νὰ ἐπιτύχουν τὴν ἐκπλήρωσιν τοῦ ἱεροῦ αὐτῶν πόθου καὶ νὰ ἀποκτήσουν ἕνα ὡραῖον κτίριον, ὅπου ἔχουν τὸν ναΐσκον καὶ τὴν αἴθουσάν των. Μὲ ἐνθουσιασμὸν μὲ ὡδήγησαν νὰ ἴδω τὴν ἐπιτυχίαν των καὶ τὸ μέγα ἀπόκτημά των. «Θεοφιλέστατε», μοῦ λέγουν μὲ συγκίνησιν, «δὲν θὰ ζητῶμεν πλέον ξένας αἰθούσας νὰ τελῶμεν τὰ ἅγια μυστήρια τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας. Ἔχομεν τὸν ἰδικόν μας ναόν. Θὰ ὑπάρχῃ καὶ εἰς τὴν πόλιν μας Ἑλληνικὴ Ὀρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία».

Ἐκεῖνο δὲ τὸ ὁποῖον εἶναι ἄξιον νὰ σημειωθῇ εἶναι τὸ θρησκευτικὸν πρόγραμμα, τὸ ὁποῖον ἔχουν καταρτίσει. Ἐφόσον θὰ ἔχουν Θείαν Λειτουργίαν ἅπαξ τοῦ μηνὸς κατὰ Κυριακήν, τὰς λοιπὰς Κυριακὰς θὰ συνέρχωνται νὰ ψάλλουν τροπάρια ἀπὸ τὸν Ὄρθρον, τὴν Δοξολογίαν καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα θὰ γίνεται Κατηχητικὸν μάθημα ἐπὶ τῇ βάσει τοῦ προγράμματος τῆς Ἱερᾶς ἡμῶν Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς.

Τὸ παράδειγμα τῶν νέων τούτων νομίζομεν ὅτι εἶναι μία τρανὴ ἀπόδειξις τῶν αἰσθημάτων τῶν νέων μας ὡς πρὸς τὴν Ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν καὶ Ἐκκλησίαν μας, καὶ μαρτυρεῖ ὅτι ὑπὸ τὴν καθοδήγησιν τῆς ἀνωτέρας Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς μας ἀρχῆς ἡ Ὀργάνωσις τῆς G.O.Y.A. θὰ ἐκπληρώσῃ τὸν σκοπόν της καὶ οἱ νέοι μας θὰ συνεχίσουν μὲ ἀδιάπτωτον ἐνδιαφέρον νὰ μεριμνοῦν διὰ τὴν ἐπιβίωσιν καὶ τὴν πρόοδον τῆς Ἁγίας ἡμῶν Ὀρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ μας.

Ὁ Παρατηρητὴς εἶναι τὸ ἐπίσημον δημοσιογραφικὸν ὄργανον τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς. Ἐγγραφόμενοι συνδρομηταὶ ὑποστηρίζετε τὸ ἔργον της.

G.O.Y.A. -- ΚΥΚΛΟΣ ΕΛΠΙΔΩΝ

Ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοφιλ. Ἐπισκόπου Τροπαίου
Κου ΠΟΛΥΕΥΚΤΟΥ

ΦΩΝΗ ἐλπίδος. Δημιουργικὸς στοχασμός. Ἀνάγκη κοινωνική. Χριστιανικὴ ἀποστολή. Ψυχικὴ ἐκδήλωσις. Συναντήθηκαν. Ἤνωσαν τὴν φωνή τους. Ἔγιναν μᾶζα, πεμπτόσταγμα καὶ σκοπός, καὶ προετοίμασαν τὴν ἐκκόλαψι τῆς Γκόγια.

Σκέφθηκεν ὁ ἀπόδημος. Ψιθύρισε σεμνὰ ἡ νεότης. Ὁ δείκτης τοῦ σεισμογράφου τῆς ζωῆς μας ἐσημείωσε τὴν κίνησι. Τὸ ψιθύρισμα ἔγινε παράπονο. Τὸ παράπονο τὸ συνέλαβεν ὁ δέκτης τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς διοικητικῆς παρατηρητικότητος τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Μέσα στὰ δίκτυα τῆς ἐργώδους μερίμνης της ἔπρεπε νὰ σταματήσῃ ἡ ἀνησυχία τοῦ ἀποδήμου καὶ νὰ γαληνεύσῃ ὁ λογισμός του. Ἔπρεπε νὰ δικαιωθῇ ἡ ἐμπιστοσύνη του πρὸς τὴν ἀρχηγεύουσα θρησκευτικὴ Μητέρα του. Ἀγρυπνοῦσεν ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἐπάνω στὸ παρατηρητήριο τῆς πνευματικῆς λειτουργίας καὶ οἰκοκυρωσύνης. Αἱ χορδές της πῆραν τὸ παράπονο γιὰ νὰ τὸ μεταβιβάσουν στοὺς πιστοὺς σὲ ἁρμονία προοπτικῆς.

Ὁ Ἀρχηγός μας, μέσα στὴν ρυθμιστική του στιβαρότητα εἶπε δημιουργικά: Γενηθήτω . . . Καὶ ἔγινεν ἡ G.O.Y.A.

Ἐδημιουργήθη ἔτσι ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ Ἕνωσις Ὀρθοδόξων Νέων κάτω ἀπὸ τὰς θερμὰς πτέρυγας τῆς Ἀρχιεπισκοπικῆς προστασίας. Τὰ βλέμματα ἠλεκτρίσθησαν. Ἀνάψαν λυχνάρια σκοπῶν καὶ ἐλπίδων. Ὑψώθησαν λάβαρα οἴστρου καὶ χαρᾶς. Τὰ στήθη τὰ ἐθώπευσαν ζέφυροι ἐνθουσιασμῶν. Ἐμπρός, Ὀρθόδοξη νεότης . . . Τὰ βήματα πῆραν τὸν ρυθμὸ τῶν σκοπῶν, τῶν ἐλπίδων, τῶν ὁραματισμῶν. Ἐμπρὸς γιὰ τὴ νίκη. Ἡ νεότης μας ἄρχισε τὸ ὑπέροχο ξεκίνημά της μὲ τὸν σταυρὸ στὸ χέρι. Ἔπρεπε τὸ χαρούμενο μήνυμα νὰ φθάσῃ στὰ πειὸ μακρυνὰ σημεῖα τῆς Ὀρθοδοξίας στὴν Ἀμερική. Ὑπέρκαλλη ἡ νεότης μας ἔπαιρνε θέσι μέσα στὴν θριαμβευτικὴ παρέλασι τῆς Ἐκκλησίας της. Γιατὶ ἀληθινὰ ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας ἄρχισε τὴν ἐποποιΐα της στὴν ἀγαπημένη μας Χώρα καὶ λαμπροφοροῦσα παρελαύνει στὰ φωτεινὰ πεπρωμένα της.

Νεότης θὰ πῇ ὄργωμα, ζωή, ἡρωϊσμός, θάρρος. Θὰ πῇ φλόγα, νίκη, δραστηριότης καὶ γλυκειὰ ποίησις. Ποίησις; Μὰ ἡ ποίησις ξεπερνᾷ πολλὲς φορὲς τὴν πραγματικότητα, φεύγει ἀπὸ τοὺς στόχους καὶ τὰ βασικὰ ἐδάφη. Καὶ τότε γίνεται θλιβερὸ λοξοδρόμημα, ποὺ ὁδηγεῖ στὴν ἄρνησι — ὄχι σπάνια — στὸν ἐγω-φιλαυτισμό. Ἐκεῖ λοιπὸν ἡ νεότης μας; Θὰ ἦταν τραγῳδία. Αὐτὸ θὰ ἐσήμαινε ἄρνησι στὴν θέσι της μέσα στὸ πρόγραμμα, τὴν ζωή μας, τὰ προβλήματα, τὴν πίστι μας, τὴν ἐγκαύχησί μας. Ἄρνησι τῆς προσωπικότητός της μέσα στὴν εἰδικὴ καταγωγή, τὰς παραδόσεις, τὶς κρυφόγλυκες ἀναμονές μας καὶ τὴν φροντίδα νὰ μὴ σβύσῃ ἐκεῖνο ποὺ ἦταν, ἐκεῖνο ποὺ ἐλπίζαμε νὰ εἶναι, ἐκεῖνο ποὺ ἀγωνισθήκαμε νὰ γίνῃ καὶ ποὺ τόσο τὸ πρόσεξε ἡ Ἐκκλησία μέσα στὰ σημεῖα τῶν καιρῶν. Ἡ προσφορὰ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας πρὶν ἀπὸ καιρὸ εἶχε βγῇ στὸ κατῶφλι γιὰ νὰ προϋπαντήσῃ τὴν Ὀρθόδοξη νεότητα, νὰ τὴν χειραγωγήσῃ εἰς τὰ ἐνδότερα τῶν πόθων, τῶν ἐπιδιώξεών της, τῶν ἀληθειῶν της. Ἡ νεότης ὅμως ἔπρεπε νὰ περάσῃ πολλὰ στάδια, νὰ δοκιμάσῃ τοὺς αὐτοκλονισμούς της, νὰ ζυγισθῇ στὴν πλάστιγγα τῆς ὡριμότητος, νὰ ἐκτιμήσῃ τὰς εὐθύνας τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, γιὰ νὰ μπορέσῃ ἔτσι νὰ εὕρῃ τὸ μονοπάτι, ποὺ θὰ ὡδηγοῦσε στὸ κατῶφλι, ὅπου ἀνέμενε προϋπαντητικὸς ὁ χαιρετισμὸς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ὁ γεμᾶτος χάρι, δροσιὰ καὶ τρυφερότητα. Ἡ συνάντησις τώρα πειὰ ἔγινε. Καὶ στὴν συνάντησι χαράχθηκε ἡ ἀφετηρία. Ἐκεῖ ἀκριβῶς ποὺ συναντήθηκαν οἱ δύο κόσμοι. Ἐκεῖ ποὺ ἡ ἱστορία μὲ πολλὴ εὐρύτητα καὶ κατανόησι δὲν θέλησε νὰ ἐπιβάλῃ ἀξιώσεις, ἀλλὰ νὰ καθοδηγήσῃ μὲ μεγαλοκαρδία καὶ πραότητα, ἔτσι ὅπως ἡ μάννα τῶν πουλιῶν φέρεται στὰ πρωτοπετάγματα τῶν νεογνῶν της. Ὡραία ἡ ἀφετηρία αὐτὴ καὶ μεγαλειώδης καὶ εἶχε κάτι ἀπὸ λάμψι καὶ κάτι ἀπὸ θρίαμβο καὶ δικαίωσι στοὺς ἀγῶνας, τὸν ἱδρῶτα καὶ τὰς θυσίας τοῦ μετανάστου. Ὕστερα ὅμως ἀπὸ τὴν ἀφετηρία εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἀγώνισμα καὶ ὁ δρόμος καὶ ἡ ἐξέλιξις. Ἐδῶ ἡ οὐσία ἐπεκτείνεται, τὰ κριτήρια γίνονται ἀπαιτητικὰ καὶ ἀτόφια καὶ σβύνουν τὰ συναισθηματικὰ εἰδύλλια. Ἡ ἀφετηρία πρέπει νὰ μείνῃ πίσω καὶ κεῖνα ἀπὸ τὴν σκέψι, τὴν λογική, τὴν εὐθύνη καὶ τὴν ἀγάπη ποὺ τὴν ἐδημιούργησαν ν' ἀρχίσουν νὰ παίρνουν πειὸ σαρκωμένη μορφὴ καὶ ἐκδήλωσι. Ἐκεῖ εἶναι ὁ κόσμος τῶν προϋποθέσεων, ἐδῶ ὅμως προβάλλουν αἱ ἀνάγκαι καὶ ἡ θετικὴ πειὰ προσφορά.

Οἱ μεγάλοι τίτλοι ἐπιβάλλουν καὶ μόχθους σκληροὺς καὶ αὐταπάρνησι καὶ πρὸ παντὸς ἀνύψωσί μας στὸ ἐπίπεδό τους. Τίτλος ἐδόθη στὴν νεότητά μας. G.O.Y.A. . . . Μεγάλο ὄνομα, ποὺ τὰ ἴχνη του ἀρχίζουν ἀπὸ τὴν αὐγὴ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας. Καὶ ἀπὸ τότε ἄρχισε καὶ ἡ μάχη. Μάχη κατὰ τῆς διαλυτικῆς ἀδιαφορίας. Μάχη γιὰ τοὺς ἀνθρωπιστικοὺς προσανατολισμούς, γιὰ τὴν προώθησι τῆς εἰρηνιστικῆς ἀγάπης, γιὰ τὸ πύργωμα τῆς Ναζωρικῆς ἀληθείας. Τὰ φυ-

λάκια καὶ τὰ προχώματα ἀπὸ τότε εἶχαν σκαφθῇ μέσα στὰ μέτωπα τῆς διανοήσεως, τοῦ αἰσθήματος, τῆς βιώσεως. Ἡ νεότης μας εἶναι στράτευμα τῆς Ὀρθοδοξίας. Ὁ τρόπος τῆς μάχης ἴσως παντοῦ νὰ ἄλλαξε, ὄχι ὅμως στὴν χριστιανικὴ Ὀρθοδοξία. Εἶναι ἡ μάχη τοῦ ἀλτρουϊσμοῦ, τῆς θυσίας, τοῦ σφυρηλατοῦντος ἰδανικοῦ, τῆς ἀναγεννητικῆς ἀγάπης. Ἐδῶ ἀρχίζει ὁ ρόλος τῆς Γκόγια. Νὰ δώσῃ ὅ,τι πολύτιμο ἔχει σὲ σθένος, σὲ ἀνοιχτὸ ἀγῶνα, σὲ ἱκανότητα, σὲ ζῆλο, σὲ κατάρτισι, σὲ δημιουργικὴ ἐπιμονή, σὲ θρησκευτικότητα. Ἡ περίοδος τοῦ πλατωνικοῦ λυρισμοῦ ἀγάπης γιὰ τὴν πίστι καὶ τὴν Ἐκκλησία νὰ μεταβληθῇ σὲ ἐπίμοχθο καὶ συστηματικὸ δούλευμα τῆς ἐπιβιώσεώς της μέσα στὰ καθωρισμένα πλαίσια τῆς παραδόσεως καὶ τοῦ δόγματος. Χρειάζεται δουλειὰ καὶ ἀφιέρωσις. Παρῆλθεν ἡ περίοδος τῆς συγκροτήσεως καὶ τῶν σχεδιασμῶν. Δὲν φθάνουν μόνον αὐτά. Αὐτὰ εἶναι προκαταρκτικά. Ὁ καιρὸς ἐπιβάλλει νὰ περάσουν τὰ νεφελώματα καὶ ν' ἀρχίσῃ ἡ κοσμογονία, ἡ σταθερὴ κοσμογονία. Εἶναι ἡ ἐπιβολὴ τοῦ κύρους τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ποὺ ἀπαιτεῖ πολλοὺς κόπους ἀκόμη. Εἶναι ἡ ἐξεύρεσις τῶν ἄλλων τρόπων πρὸς ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν θησαυρῶν της, μὲ διάκρισι καὶ σεμνότητα, μέσα στὴν πολυδοξία τῶν θρησκευτικῶν κινήσεων καὶ τὴν ἀκαμψία τῶν προσηλυτισμῶν. Εἶναι ἡ ἀντιμετώπισις τῆς ἀρνήσεως, ποὺ τάχα προεβλήθη ὡς ἀντικειμενικότης καὶ ἀποκαλυπτικὸ πόρισμα τῶν νέων δεδομένων τοῦ πολιτισμοῦ μας, τῆς ἐπιστημονικῆς κατακτήσεως, τῶν ἐργαστηριακῶν πειραματισμῶν. Σ' ὅλα αὐτὰ πρέπει κάποιαν ἀπάντησι νὰ δώσῃ ἡ G.O.Y.A., γιατὶ ἔχει βαπτισθῇ στὴν κολυμβήθρα τῆς Ὀρθοδοξίας καὶ ἐζήτησε νὰ δοκιμάσῃ τὴν σκληρότητα ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ὡραιότητα τοῦ ἀγῶνος τῆς στρατευομένης Ἐκκλησίας μας.

"Οσο ἀνεβαίνουμε σὲ ἀγάπη καὶ γνῶσι τόσο καὶ τὰ καθήκοντα αὐξάνουν. Εἶναι πρόκλησις γιὰ τὴν Γκόγια ὅλα αὐτά, ποὺ ἀνέφερα, γιατὶ καὶ ἡ G.O.Y.A. ἀνέβηκε σὲ αἰσθήματα καὶ εὐθύνη καὶ προορισμὸ ἀπὸ τότε ποὺ ὠργανώθηκε. Τῆς εἶναι γνώριμα ὅλα αὐτά, γιατὶ μαζύ τους γεννήθηκε στὸν αἰῶνα αὐτὸν τῶν παραδοξοτήτων. Καὶ ἀφοῦ εἶναι γνώριμα, εἶναι καὶ πειὸ εὔκολο νὰ ἐξουδετερωθοῦν. Ἔχει τὸ σφρῖγος ἡ νεότης μας. Ἀρκεῖ ἀπὸ τὸ στάδιο τῶν συζητήσεων καὶ τῆς ἐξωτερικῆς κρούσεως νὰ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς τὴν οὐσίαν τῆς ἀποστολῆς. Νὰ ἀρχίσῃ τὸν πρῶτον γύρον, τὸν γύρον τῆς διαφωτίσεως, τῆς ἐπιθέσεως κατὰ τῶν κινδύνων, ποὺ ἀπειλοῦν τὴν πνευματική μας ζωή, τὴν θρησκεία μας, τὴν εὐτυχία μας, τὴν ξεχωριστὴ ὀντότητά μας. Οἱ αἰῶνες τῆς Ὀρθοδοξίας προσέχουν τὴν Γκόγια. Σᾶς τοὺς ἐνεπιστεύθη τοὺς αἰῶνας αὐτούς, νέοι, ἡ Ἁγία Ἐκκλησία μας. Γίνετε κύκλος ἐλπίδος διὰ τὸ μέλλον μας καὶ ἐδῶ καὶ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ὅλον.

G.O.Y.A. Ἂς λάμψῃ ἀπὸ φῶς καὶ ἀπὸ αὐτοθυσία.

The Religious News Observer

REV. D. J. CONSTANTELOS, Editor
Perth Amboy, N. J.

More Religious

United States schoolchildren are much more religious than their parents, said sociologist Carson McGuire of the University of Texas to the Southern Regional Conference on Human Relations Education at the University of Oklahoma. Eighty-five percent of them "have some sort of religious affiliation, a proportion significantly greater than the 59.5% of adults in the United States claimed as church members."

Time, July 2, 1956

■

Mid-South Synod Backs Integration

The Synod of the Mid-South composed almost wholly of white members, has voted unanimously to merge with comprising thirty-four Negro Churches, the office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A., announced today. The statement said the action took place at a meeting at Maryville College, Maryville, Tenn.

N.Y. Herald-Tribune, July 7, 1956

■

Converted to Christianity

Mitsu Fuchida, who was captain of one of the Japanese warships involved in the attack on Pearl Harbor, has been converted to Christianity under the preaching of Jacob De Shazer, one of Col. James Doolittle's pilots in the first American raid on the Japanese mainland. Fuchida is a native of Kashiwabara in Mie Ken, legendary site of the enthronment of Jimmu Fenno, Japan's first emperor (660 B.C.).

The Christian Century, July 4, 1956

■

Conference of Hellenic and Christian Civilization

The excellent organizations "Christian Union of Scientists" and "Christian Social Group" of Greece were the sponsors of a conference of Christian and Hellenic civilization that took place recently in Athens, Greece. Dr. M. Geroulanos, a professor at Athens University and a member of the Academy of Sciences, was the president.

A return to the principles of the Hellenic and Christian civilization, as the salvation of mankind and a sound foundation for lasting peace, was advocated by the conference. Excerpts from the writings of the church fathers to be introduced in Public Education, was another decision of the conference.

National Herald, July 5, 1956

THE VIRGIN MARY AND OUR SALVATION

By JOHN D. ZIZIOULAS

IT IS NOT just an accident that our Church devotes her best hymns to the person of the Virgin Mary. Nor it is a meaningless fact that besides the centric event of the Resurrection of our Lord and the mystery of His economy in general, the person of the Blessed Virgin has been a source of inspiration for Orthodox hymnography. Inspiration is, of course, the moving and creating presupposition of all "hymnology." Yet, an inspiration that puts into movement a whole stream of profound theological thought is not a usual one. Such a thing can only appear when the inspiring person is in an equal depth involved in the theological thought of the chanting Church.

The Church has always connected the person of our Blessed Virgin with the most sacred profounds of her life. It was not by accident that she was so deeply involved in the great discussions of the Third Ecumenical Council. It was not for nothing that the Church insisted then on calling her "Theotokos." This insistance reveals the fact that her rôle in the mystery of salvation has been deeply important and cannot be overlooked. Studying this period of the history of the Church one cannot but realize how deeply the Church felt in this way. The impression he gets is that there could not be—historically speaking—a way of securing the right terminology about the Lord's divinity without finding the exact term to describe the rôle that St. Mary played in His Incarnation. Her place in the thought of the Church was as important as it was in the history of salvation itself. For there has never been an ecumenical discussion in the Church without an essentially important reason.

But if this attitude of the Church towards the Virgin Mary was not a mere accident, what was the essential reason of all that?

It is without doubt that the Church confesses our salvation in the name of Christ alone. "Not an angel, and not a man but the Lord has saved us," we declare. What is then the place and the importance of a man in this great divine action? Man is the object of salvation; yet, for his salvation God did not and does not act alone but through him whom He wants to save. It is blasphemy to ask why. But it is also blindness and unbelief to deny this fact. The whole Old Testament with the Law and the Prophets, even the great philosophers of the gentile world were used by His wisdom to serve the fulfilment of His "pre-eternal will," which is man's salvation. But above all the very person of our Saviour reveals this truth. For Christ is not only a perfect God; He is at the same time a perfect man. Simple and obvious and easily acceptable as this truth is, let it not pass by without revealing to us its great implications. Our Saviour as a perfect man points to our participiation in our own salvation. One may minimize this participation as much as he wishes. He may consider it secondary compared with the divine initiative. But let him keep in mind that God considered this participation important despite the fact that He is the Almighty One. Man's participation in the work of his salvation even if it is—logically—the least necessary, it is God's will; and nothing is more necessary than the fulfilment of His will.

But in this very point the Virgin Mary plays her great rôle. She is the chosen representative of the human "yes" which was asked by God for the fulfilment of His pre-eternal plan. In the moment of her obedience to the angelic message she participates in the history of our salvation. Her participation was not simply a rational or a moral attitude. She participated fully, existentially. She gave human flesh to the Divine Word so that humanity may become divine.

* * *

It is true that we are fallen creatures and miserable sinners. Yet we are created "in God's image" and we should not forget that Orthodox Hymnography is kneaded up with the tears of repenting souls. But at the same time she is never afraid of emphasizing man's dignity and greatness and declaring that his salvation is a result of both human and divine factors.

In the person of our Blessed Virgin Mary we vision man's importance and man's great rôle. In her obedience we realize our way to salvation. It is in her that humanity responded to God's will that divine and human meet together in the Incarnate Word. Being conscious of that, let us join the Church in her hymns to the Mother of God and meet God through the same path of prompt obedience to His will.

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ΣΚΕΨΕΙΣ & ΠΑΡΑΤΗΡΗΣΕΙΣ

Η ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ

Διὰ τὸ εὐσεβὲς ποίμνιον τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Ἑλληνικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ἡ λυπημένη μητέρα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἡ γλυκειὰ Παναγία, εἶναι «ὁ ποταμὸς ὁ γλυκερὸς τοῦ ἐλέους», ὁ «λιμὴν τῶν χειμαζομένων», ἡ ἀγαθὴ «μεσίτρια» πρὸς τὸν οὐράνιον Θεόν. Οἱ πιστοί, ποὺ καταφεύγουν πρὸς αὐτὴν μὲ δάκρυα, ἐπιτυγχάνουν διὰ τῶν «μεσιτειῶν» της τὴν ἀνακούφισίν των ἀπὸ τοὺς πόνους καὶ τὰς θλίψεις τῆς παρούσης ζωῆς καὶ τυγχάνουν τῶν δώρων, ποὺ ἀπορρέουν ἐκ τῆς σταυρικῆς θυσίας τοῦ Υἱοῦ της. Τοῦτο ἰδιαιτέρως τὸ αἰσθάνεται κανεὶς κατὰ τὴν περίοδον τοῦ «Δεκαπενταυγούστου». Κατὰ τὴν περίοδον αὐτὴν εἰς τὰς Ὀρθοδόξους χώρας καὶ εἰς τὰς Ὀρθοδόξους κοινότητας τοῦ ἐξωτερικοῦ «μοσχοβολᾶ ἡ μυστικὴ εὐωδία τῆς Θεοτόκου». Διὰ τῆς νηστείας, τῶν πνευματικῶν ἀσκήσεων καὶ διὰ τῶν ὡραίων ὕμνων τῆς ἀκολουθίας τῆς παρακλήσεως, οἱ Ὀρθόδοξοι Χριστιανοὶ πλησιάζουν περισσότερον τὴν Παναγία Μητέρα τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἐναποθέτουν εἰς τοὺς πόδας της τὸ φορτίον τῶν θλίψεων καὶ ἁμαρτιῶν των μὲ τὴν γλυκεῖαν ἐλπίδα, ὅτι διὰ τῆς βοηθείας της θὰ τύχουν τῶν λυτρωτικῶν δώρων τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Κυρίου.

Ἡ σεμνὴ αὐτὴ τροφὴ τῆς καρδίας τῶν Ὀρθοδόξων πρὸς τὴν Παναγία δὲν ἔχει καμμίαν σχέσιν μὲ τὰς ἐπιδεικτικὰς λατρευτικὰς τελετὰς τῶν Ρωμαιοκαθολικῶν πρὸς τὴν Παρθένον καὶ εὑρίσκεται εἰς ὀξεῖαν ἀντίθεσιν πρὸς τὸ ἐγωϊστικὸν πεῖσμα τῶν Προτεσταντῶν, ποὺ ἐπιμένουν νὰ ἀρνοῦνται τὴν ἰδιάζουσαν θέσιν ποὺ κατέχει μεταξὺ τῶν ἁγίων ἡ μητέρα τοῦ Θεοῦ.

G.O.Y.A.

Ἐπ' εὐκαιρίᾳ τοῦ Πέμπτου Ἐθνικοῦ Συνεδρίου τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Νεολαίας Ἀμερικῆς (G.O.Y.A.), δημοσιεύομεν εἰς τὸ παρὸν τεῦχος τοῦ «Ὀρθοδόξου Παρατηρητοῦ» τὸ μήνυμα τοῦ Σεβασμιωτάτου Ἀρχιεπισκόπου μας κ. Μιχαὴλ πρὸς τὰ μέλη τοῦ Συνεδρίου, καθὼς ἐπίσης καὶ ἐπίκαιρον συνεργασίαν τῶν Θεοφιλ. βοηθῶν Ἐπισκόπων τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς, Νύσσης κ. Γερμανοῦ, Ὀλύμπου κ. Δημητρίου καὶ Τροπαίου κ. Πολυεύκτου. Καὶ ἐκ τοῦ μηνύματος τοῦ Σεβασμιωτάτου καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἄρθρων τῶν ἀνωτέρων τούτων στελεχῶν τῆς ποιμαινούσης Ἐκκλησίας σαφῶς καὶ κατηγορηματικῶς ἐξάγεται, ὅτι τὸ καθῆκον τῆς G.O.Y.A. εἶναι νὰ διατηρήσῃ εἰς τὰ στήθη τῶν νέων μας τοὺς εὐγενεῖς ἐνθουσιασμοὺς καὶ νὰ τοὺς βοηθήσῃ νὰ συνειδητοποιήσουν τὴν Ἑλληνορθόδοξον πίστιν των καὶ νὰ τὴν μετουσιώσουν εἰς χριστιανικὴν πρᾶξιν.

Ἡ σύνθεσις τοῦ προγράμματος τοῦ Συνεδρίου μᾶς βεβαιώνει, ὅτι τόσον τὰ ὀργανωτικὰ στελέχη τοῦ Συνεδρίου, ὅσον καὶ τὰ μέλη τοῦ Ἐθνικοῦ Συμβουλίου ἔχουν ἐκκαθαρίσει εἰς τὴν σκέψιν των τὴν ἀνωτέρω γραμμήν. Αἱ ἀποφάσεις καὶ ὁ χρόνος θὰ μᾶς δείξουν πλέον ἐὰν οἱ νέοι μας ἀντελήφθησαν καλῶς ὅτι, τότε μόνον ἡ ὀργάνωσίς των θὰ ἐπηρεάσῃ τὴν πορείαν καὶ θὰ βοηθήσῃ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν μας εἰς τὴν πλήρωσιν τοῦ ἱεραποστολικοῦ της προορισμοῦ, ὅταν ἀποβῇ ἐργαστήριον καλλιεργείας Ἑλληνορθοδόξων ἀξιῶν καὶ μέσον ἐκπαιδεύσεως καὶ κατὰ Χριστὸν ἀναπτύξεως.

ΑΝΑΛΥΤΙΚΟΝ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΚΑΤΗΧΗΤΙΚΩΝ ΣΧΟΛΕΙΩΝ

Ἡ Διεύθυνσις τῶν Κατηχητικῶν Σχολείων τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς ἐξέδωσε τελευταίως καὶ ἐταχυδρόμησεν εἰς τὰς Κοινότητας, εἰς ἀγγλικὴν μετάφρασιν, τὸ Ἀναλυτικὸν Πρόγραμμα τῶν Κατηχητικῶν Σχολείων. Πρόκειται περὶ ἐργασίας θεμελιώδους, τῆς ὁποίας ἡ κατάλληλος καὶ συστηματικὴ χρῆσις ἐκ μέρους τῶν Ἱερέων, Κατηχητῶν καὶ Κατηχητριῶν θὰ βοηθήσῃ σημαντικῶς τὴν καλυτέραν ὀργάνωσιν καὶ προαγωγὴν τοῦ Κατηχητικοῦ Σχολείου.

Τὸ ἀναλυτικὸν τοῦτο πρόγραμμα, οἱ κανονισμοὶ λειτουργίας καὶ ὀργανώσεως τῶν Κατηχητικῶν Σχολείων, ἡ ἐπιτυχὴς λειτουργία τοῦ Φροντιστηρίου Ἐκπαιδεύσεως Κατηχητριῶν εἰς τὴν Ἀκαδημίαν Ἁγίου Βασιλείου ἀποτελοῦν, χωρὶς ἀμφιβολίαν, σταθερὰ βήματα πρὸς τὴν ὁλοκλήρωσιν τοῦ προγράμματος τῆς Κατηχητικῆς Ὑπηρεσίας. Τὸ πρόγραμμα τοῦτο θὰ καλυφθῇ κατὰ τὸ μεγαλύτερον αὐτοῦ μέρος μὲ τὴν συγγραφὴν καὶ ἔκδοσιν τῶν Κατηχητικῶν Βοηθημάτων, διὰ τὰ ὁποῖα ἐπιζητεῖται διὰ τοῦ προκηρυχθέντος διαγωνισμοῦ ἡ συνεργασία τῶν καλυτέρων καὶ καταλληλοτέρων πρὸς τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο Ἱερέων, Κατηχητῶν καὶ Κατηχητριῶν μας.

13η ΚΛΗΡΙΚΟΛΑΪΚΗ

Ἔχουν καθῆκον ἐπιβεβλημένον αἱ Κοινότητές μας νὰ στείλουν τοὺς ἀντιπροσώπους των εἰς τὴν 13ην Κληρικολαϊκὴν Συνέλευσιν. Οὗτοι, μεταβαίνοντες ἐκεῖ, πρέπει νὰ ἔχουν εἰς τὸν νοῦν των καθαρὰν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν ἀπόψεων τῶν Κοινοτήτων των ἐπὶ τῶν θεμάτων ποὺ πρόκειται νὰ συζητηθοῦν. Τὰς ἀπόψεις των αὐτὰς πρέπει νὰ θέσουν ὑπ' ὄψιν τῆς ὁλομελείας μὲ σεμνότητα, νὰ εἶναι δὲ ἕτοιμοι νὰ λάβουν μέρος εἰς δημιουργικὴν καὶ προσηρμοσμένην εἰς τὴν πραγματικότητα συζήτησιν. Διὰ τοῦ τρόπου αὐτοῦ θὰ εἶναι δυνατὸν νὰ ὁδηγηθῶμεν εἰς ἀποφάσεις πρακτικὰς καὶ ἐφαρμοσίμους. Ἂς μὴ λησμονοῦμεν ὅτι ὁ ἐχθρὸς τῆς προόδου εἶναι τὰ «κενὰ λόγια», τὰ «οὐτοπιστικὰ σχέδια» καὶ ὁ «ἀνεδαφισμός».

SUNDAY SCHOOL SEMINAR

JULY, 1956

THE fourth Sunday School Seminar, held at St. Basil's Academy, was a great success. There was an enrollment of about fifty, both boys and girls, representing communities, not only from the surrounding states, but the South, Mid-West, California and Canada.

As in the past, the students of this summer's Seminar have had the excellent opportunity to attend a very rich program of courses, lectures, educational tours and many other recreational activities.

The regular daily courses taught were the following: Introduction to the Orthodox Church, Organization of the Sunday School, Psychology for Sunday School Teachers, Methods of Teaching in the Sunday School, and Music for the Sunday School. These lessons were taught by the Professors of St. Basil's Academy, Xenophon Diamond (Director), Philip Emmanuel, Emmanuel Hatziemmanuel, Peter Nychis, and Mrs. Ethel Nychis.

The series of lectures consisted of theoretical and practical subjects, like Religion and Science, the True Meaning of the Church, Successful Teaching, Psychology in the Classroom, and the Holy Land. The last three subjects were illustrated by beautiful filmstrips and slides. The lecturers were Rt. Rev. Athenagoras, Bishop of Elaia and Dean of the Theological Seminary, Rev. K. Kazanas, Rev. John Poulos, and Rev. John Psillas.

The program of educational and recreational tours included visits to the nearby historical sites and landmarks, such as Hyde Park, George Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh, West Point Military Academy, Bear Mountain, and many places of interest in New York City. "Greek Night" was enjoyed by all at the Academy — especially the presentation of colored slides from the internal life of the students of St. Basil's Academy and a film taken on Graduation Day with many beautiful scenes from the ancient Greek tragedy "Electra," which was played by the students of the Teachers College. The final affair was the very touching and very impressive Farewell Banquet which took place at the beautiful Bear Mountain Inn.

The rich program which combined study and pleasure, the beautiful estate and surroundings of St. Basil's Academy, the spacious grounds, the comfortable buildings, the picturesque School Chapel, and the truly spiritual and heartwarming atmosphere really inspired and enchanted the Sunday School group.

The following excerpts from the students' evaluation of the Seminar show how they feel about it:

The Natural Environment:

Very pleasant, attractive and relaxing. . . . Doubt if it could have been more beautiful. . . . Practically incomparable! . . . Conducive to studying and thinking in peace away from the hubbub of city life. This environment alone seems to tell you something of the universe and God. . . . Words just can't describe this beautiful place. The grounds are neat and well kept. The teachers are very nice, friendly and helpful. This place gives you a "being-right-at-home" feeling. . . . Wherever I walk on St. Basil's territory, I feel God is with me. Every tree and leaf is happiness . . . beauty! Within the building I feel the same and . . . beyond a doubt in the so-dearly loved chapel! The feeling of God is everywhere. . . . St. Basil's has been the most beautiful place I have ever seen.

The Courses Taught:

The courses taught were just right. They dealt exactly with the problems that we face in our Sunday Schools today. . . . I must admit I underestimated the scholastic rating of the courses before I attended them. They proved to be most informative and I feel I will benefit greatly by them when I return to my community. . . . The courses taught here were excellent. I am sure that they will help us tremendously in our teaching when we arrive at our communties again. . . . Well organized and concentrated considering limitations. Taught in an interesting and stimulating manner. Definitely enlightening and informative, giving

SUNDAY SCHOOL SEMINAR CLASS 1956

STUDENTS IN THE CLASS ROOM

us concrete material to work with and even further our studies. . . . Each brought enlightenment and made us more aware of our Greek Orthodox beliefs. Material will be of assistance to us and others in our community. . . . How I wish all my friends and relatives could have attended classes with me each day! The courses are such that, once acquainted with each subject you receive a greater knowledge of our religion and also respect for it.

The Lectures and Extracurriculum Activities:

Helped us see more of our religion being lived by the fathers through their inspirational talks. This was a blessing I will always remember. . . . I have enjoyed the lectures very much because they have helped me not only in my studies, but have cleared up a few questions in my mind. . . . The extra-curriculum activities were just wonderful. I have seen many places and things which I have wanted to see all my life.

The Administrative and Teaching Personnel:

Excellent. This describes how I feel towards all the professors and administrators. Indeed, fortunate having such an assemblage of personnel here. . . . The administrative and teaching personnel were just wonderful to us and they made our stay here a very pleasant one. . . . Always ready to give you a helping hand. Never too busy to stop and talk and discuss with you any of your problems. . . . Since the first minute I came I was shown complete welcome and friendliness. I've been especially thankful for this when I've had a bit of homesickness.

The Whole Spiritual Atmosphere:

Inspiring as a whole. Given me a new insight in my religious feelings and has strengthened my conviction. . . . Creates thoughts of religion you never experienced before. It has helped me immensely. . . . The atmosphere is such that makes one feel "in blissful ecstacy"!

Comments:

Since I had not expected any tremendous experience, this has been a most gratifying and stimulating experience for me in every respect; religiously educationally and socially. . . . The wonderful instructors, priests, lectures, religion classes and friends of the same Greek training and faith have made me much more aware of the pride connected with our heritage and strengthened my faith. . . . My outlook on teaching has entirely changed. The stress will no longer be on teaching facts as much as trying to guide children to Christian living; also trying to understand their problems and assisting them in personal ways. . . . The Seminar has showed me that I had not been an efficient teacher and I am grateful for the help and knowledge. . . . I will never forget my experience here. . . . My stay up here at the Academy was wonderful, so wonderful that I hate the thought of leaving. . . . Give more publicity on the Sunday School Seminar and how important it is for every Sunday School Teacher to take advantage of it.

The following is part of a letter sent by A. T., student from Gary, Indiana:

. . . Ever since I've been home, I have

(Continued on page 188)

STUDY PERIOD

Η ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ ΕΙΣ ΤΑ ΙΕΡΑ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΑ

Ὑπὸ τοῦ Πανοσιολ. Ἀρχιμ. Γ. ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ

Οἱ ΙΕΡΟΙ Εὐαγγελισταὶ ἔχουν ὡς κύριον σκοπὸν τῶν Εὐαγγελίων τὴν ἐξιστόρησιν τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς διδασκαλίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Διὰ τὸν λόγον αὐτὸν δὲν προσέχουν τὰ πρόσωπα, ποὺ ἔλαβον μέρος εἰς τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγείου ζωῆς τοῦ Σωτῆρος. Ὅλοι ὅμως, καὶ οἱ συντομώτατοι, Μᾶρκος καὶ Ματθαῖος, καὶ ὁ ἱστορικώτερος Λουκᾶς καθὼς καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ ὑψιπέτης Ἰωάννης ὁ Θεολόγος, μᾶς περιέσωσαν ὡρισμένας σκηνὰς ἀπὸ τὴν ζωὴν τῆς Θεοτόκου, ὥστε δι' αὐτῶν νὰ μποροῦμε νὰ ἔχωμεν μίαν ζωντανὴν εἰκόνα τῆς προσωπικότητος τῆς Παναγίας μας.

Ὁ Εὐαγγελισμός. Τὴν πιὸ ἐκφραστικὴ εἰκόνα τῆς προσωπικότητος τῆς Θεοτόκου μᾶς τὴν διέσωσεν ὁ ἱστορικὸς Λουκᾶς εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τοῦ Εὐαγγελισμοῦ. Εἶναι τὸ μόνον σημεῖον εἰς τὰ Ἱερὰ Εὐαγγέλια, ὅπου ἡ Θεοτόκος ἀποτελεῖ τὸ κύριον πρόσωπον τῆς σκηνῆς. Εἶναι ἡ ἀρχὴ τοῦ Μυστηρίου. Τὸ συμπλήρωμα τῆς εἰκόνος μᾶς τὸ διέσωσεν ὁ Ἰωάννης παρουσιάζων τὴν Ἁγίαν Μητέρα πρὸ τοῦ Σταυροῦ, τὴν τελευταίαν στιγμὴν τῆς ἐπιγείου ζωῆς τοῦ Σωτῆρος. (Λουκᾶ 1:26-38. Ἰωάν. 19:25-27)

Ἀπεσταλμένος ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ Ἀρχάγγελος Γαβριὴλ εὑρίσκει τὴν Παρθένον τῆς Ναζαρὲτ καὶ τῆς προσφέρει τὸν κρῖνον τοῦ οὐρανίου χαιρετισμοῦ:

Χαῖρε, κεχαριτωμένη·
Ὁ Κύριος μετὰ σοῦ·
Εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξί.

Ἡ εὐσεβὴς Παρθένος ταράσσεται ἀπὸ τὸ γεγονός. Προσπαθεῖ νὰ ἐννοήσῃ. «Ποταπὸς ὁ ἀσπασμὸς οὗτος;» Τί εἴδους εἶναι ὁ χαιρετισμὸς οὗτος καὶ ποῖος νὰ εἶναι ὁ σκοπὸς αὐτοῦ;

Ὁ Ἀρχάγγελος τὴν καθησυχάζει καὶ ἀποκαλύπτει τὸ θεῖον μυστήριον, τὸ ὁποῖον καλεῖται νὰ ὑπηρετήσῃ ἡ Παρθένος. «Μὴ φοβοῦ, Μαριάμ· εὗρες γὰρ χάριν παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ . . . . Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σὲ καὶ δύναμις Ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι, καὶ συλλήψῃ ἐν γαστρὶ καὶ τέξῃ υἱόν». Τὸ οὕτω συλληφθὲν παιδίον εἶναι «ἅγιον», εἶναι αὐτὸς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ. Τὸ ὄνομά Του εἶναι ὡρισμένον, «Ἰησοῦς», τὸ ὁποῖον ἑρμηνεύεται, Σωτήρ, «αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν». Ὡς Σωτὴρ ὁ υἱός σου καὶ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ θὰ βασιλεύσῃ ἐπὶ τῶν πιστῶν τοῦ νέου Ἰσραὴλ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας «καὶ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔσται τέλος».

Ἡ Θεοτόκος παρὰ τὸν Σταυρὸν
Τμῆμα φορητῆς εἰκόνος ΙΔ΄ αἰῶνος. (Βυζαντινὸν Μουσεῖον Ἀθηνῶν).

Ἡ στιγμὴ εἶναι ἄκρως ἱερά. Ὁ εὐσεβὴς ἄνθρωπος ζῇ πάντοτε ἀφωσιωμένος εἰς τὸν Θεὸν καὶ πάντοτε ζητεῖ νὰ ἐφαρμόσῃ τὸ ἅγιον Αὐτοῦ θέλημα. Ἡ ὑπακοὴ καὶ ὑποταγὴ εἰς τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι ἡ μεγαλυτέρα ἀρετὴ τοῦ Χριστιανοῦ. Κατὰ τὸν Ἀπόστολον Παῦλον ἡ Πίστις εἶναι ὑπακοὴ εἰς Χριστόν. Τὸ δὲ σωτήριον ἔργον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔγκειται εἰς τὸ ὅτι Οὗτος «ἐγένετο ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου . . . σταυροῦ» (Φιλιπ. 2:8). Πολὺ σπανίως ὅμως ὁ ἄνθρωπος τίθεται πρὸ μιᾶς τόσον σαφοῦς προσκλήσεως διὰ νὰ ἐξυπηρετήσῃ ἕνα ὡρισμένον Θεῖον σχέδιον. Τότε χρειάζεται μεγάλη ψυχικὴ δύναμις. Χρειάζεται πίστις ἰσχυρὰ καὶ δοκιμασμένη διὰ νὰ δώσῃ τὴν ἀπάντησιν καὶ νὰ ἀναλάβῃ τὸ ἔργον, ποὺ ἡ Θεία Χάρις ἀναθέτει.

Τοιαύτην πίστιν εἶχεν ἡ θεόσδοτος κόρη τοῦ Ἰωακεὶμ καὶ τῆς Ἄννης. Διὰ τοῦτο, ὅταν ἤκουσε τὸ οὐράνιον μήνυμα τοῦ Ἀγγέλου, ἔκυψεν εὐλαβικὰ τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ τὰ χείλη της ἐψιθύρισαν τὴν ἀπάντησιν:

«Ἰδοὺ ἡ δούλη Κυρίου·
γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα σου».

Βραχεῖα ἀπάντησις, ἀλλὰ βαθυτάτη εἰς ἔννοιαν καὶ ἀνεξάντλητος εἰς διδασκαλίαν διὰ κάθε ψυχήν, ποὺ θὰ ἐπιζητήσῃ ποτὲ διδασκαλίαν εἰς τὴν ζωήν της. Μὲ τὴν ἀπάν-

τησίν της αὐτὴν ἡ εὐσεβὴς Παρθένος παρέδωσεν ἑαυτὴν ἐξ ὁλοκλήρου εἰς τὴν ὑπηρεσίαν τοῦ Θείου θελήματος, ὡς ταπεινὴ δούλη ἔναντι τοῦ μόνου Κυρίου της. Ὅ,τι ἔχει πλέον νὰ γίνῃ θὰ γίνῃ ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἡ Παρθένος δὲν ἔχει παρὰ νὰ χρησιμεύσῃ ὡς ἱερὸν ὄργανον διὰ τὸν Θεῖον σκοπὸν τῆς σωτηρίας ὁλοκλήρου τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος. Μὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ὑπακοῆς παρηκολούθησε τὴν ὅλην ἐπὶ γῆς ζωὴν τοῦ Υἱοῦ της μέχρις αὐτοῦ τοῦ Σταυροῦ, ἐπαναλαμβάνουσα εἰς κάθε δύσκολον στιγμήν: «Ἰδοὺ ἡ δούλη Κυρίου· γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ρῆμα σου».

Διὰ τῆς ἐπισκιάσεως τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος συλλαμβάνει καὶ γίνεται μήτηρ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἐπακολουθοῦν αἱ περιπέτειαι τῆς Γεννήσεως τοῦ Θείου Βρέφους. Τὸ πτωχικὸν περιβάλλον, ἡ δοξολογία τῶν Ἀγγέλων, ἡ ἐπίσκεψις τῶν ἀγαθῶν ποιμένων, ἡ προσκύνησις τῶν Μάγων, ἡ φυγὴ εἰς Αἴγυπτον· σκηναί, ποὺ γεμίζουν τὴν ψυχὴν τῆς Θείας Μητρὸς μὲ χαρὰν ἀλλὰ καὶ μὲ πόνον. Σκηναὶ ποὺ θὰ πλουτίζουν καὶ θὰ ἐξευγενίζουν ἀνὰ τοὺς αἰῶνας κάθε ψυχή, ποὺ θὰ εὐτυχήσῃ νὰ τὰς ἑορτάσῃ. (Λουκᾶ 2: 1:20. Ματθαίου 1:18-2:23)

Ἀπὸ τὴν ὑπόλοιπον ζωὴν τῆς Θεοτόκου ὀλίγας μόνον σκηνὰς μᾶς περισώζουν οἱ Εὐαγγελισταί. Εἶναι ἀρκεταὶ ὅμως διὰ νὰ χαρακτηρίσουν τὴν «Ἁγίαν Μητέρα».

Ὀκτὼ ἡμέρας μετὰ τὴν γέννησιν γίνεται ἡ περιτομή, κατὰ τὰς διατάξεις τοῦ Μωσαϊκοῦ Νόμου, καὶ τὸ παιδίον λαμβάνει τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦς, ὡς διέταξεν ὁ Ἄγγελος. Τὴν τεσσαρακοστὴν ἡμέραν ἡ Θεοτόκος προσφέρει τὸ βρέφος εἰς τὸν Ναὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ. (Λουκᾶ 2:22-28) Ὁ γεραιὸς Συμεὼν καὶ ἡ Προφῆτις Ἄννα, ἄνθρωποι θεοσεβεῖς, φωτιζόμενοι ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος, ἐγνώριζον ὅτι «ἦλθε τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου», ὁ κατάλληλος καιρός, διὰ νὰ στείλῃ ὁ Θεὸς τὸν Μεσσίαν, τὴν «παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ», διὸ καὶ ἀνέμενον ἐν τῷ Ναῷ τὴν ἔλευσιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἀπὸ τὰς προφητείας τῶν περὶ τοῦ Θείου Βρέφους ἡ μεγαλοπρεπεστέρα εἶναι ἡ δοξολογία τοῦ Συμεών: «Νῦν ἀπολύεις τὸν δοῦλον σου, Δέσποτα· ὅτι εἶδον οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου τὸ σωτήριόν σου». Καὶ πρὸς τὴν Θεοτόκον: «Καὶ σοῦ δὲ αὐτῆς τὴν ψυχὴν διελεύσεται ρομφαία», δηλαδὴ πόνον καὶ θλῖψιν θὰ δοκιμάσῃς ἐκ τῆς στάσεως τὴν ὁποίαν θὰ λάβῃ ὁ κόσμος ἔναντι τοῦ υἱοῦ σου.

Ὁ Ἰησοῦς δωδεκαετὴς ἐν τῷ Ναῷ. Μία ἄλλη σκηνή, ποὺ ἀναφέρει ὁ ἱστορικὸς Λουκᾶς, εἶναι ἡ σκηνή, ποὺ δωδεκαετὴς πλέον ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνέβη μετὰ τῶν γονέων του εἰς τὸν Ναὸν τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων κατὰ τὴν ἑορτὴν τοῦ Πάσχα. (Λουκᾶ 2:41-52) Ὁ δωδεκαετὴς Ἰησοῦς ἔμεινεν ἐν τῷ Ναῷ ἀπορροφημένος ἀπὸ τὰς συζητήσεις του μὲ τοὺς διαδασκάλους τοῦ Μωσαϊκοῦ Νόμου. Ὅταν μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀγωνιώδους ἀναζητήσεως εὗρον αὐτὸν οἱ γονεῖς του, ἡ μήτηρ τὸν ἠρώτησε: «Τέκνον, τί ἐποίησας οὕτως; Ἰδοὺ ὁ πατήρ σου κἀγὼ ὀδυνώμενοι ἐζητοῦμεν σε». Ποία ἦτο ἡ ἀπάντησις εἰς τὴν ἐρώτησιν αὐτὴν τῆς μητρός; «Τί ὅτι ἐζητεῖτε με; Οὐκ ᾔδειτε ὅτι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου δεῖ εἶναι με;» Διατί ἐζητεῖτε νὰ μὲ εὕρετε; Δὲν ἐγνωρίζατε ὅτι ἐγὼ πρέπει νὰ εἶμαι εἰς τὰ οἰκήματα τοῦ «πατρός μου»; Ἐκατάλαβε ἡ Μήτηρ τὴν ἀπάντησιν εἰς ὅλον τὸ βάθος αὐτῆς; Μᾶλλον ὄχι. Ὅπως δὲν θὰ ἐννοήσῃ ἀργότερα εἰς τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ δημοσίου βίου τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, τὴν ἔκφρασιν τοῦ Υἱοῦ της: «Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι; Οὔπω ἥκει ἡ ὥρα μου». (Ἰωάννου 2:4) Ἀργότερα, ὅταν ὁ Ἰησοῦς θὰ εὑρίσκεται εἰς τὴν ἀκμὴν τοῦ ἔργου Του καὶ ἡ Μήτηρ ἀπὸ ἀγάπη θὰ τρέξῃ εἰς βοήθειαν, ὁ Ἰησοῦς θὰ ἀπαντήσῃ: «Μήτηρ μου καὶ ἀδελφοί μου οὗτοι εἰσὶν οἱ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀκούοντες καὶ ποιοῦντες αὐτόν». (Λουκᾶ 8:19-21. Μάρκου 3:21, 31-35)

Ποῖα συναισθήματα νὰ κατελάμβανον τὴν καρδίαν τῆς Παρθένου Μητρὸς ὅταν ἤκουε τὰς προφητείας περὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ της, τὰς ἀπαντήσεις Αὐτοῦ, ἢ ὅταν παρηκολούθει τὴν ὅλην ζωὴν Αὐτοῦ; Οὐδεὶς δύναται νὰ γνωρίζῃ ἀκριβῶς. Ὁ Εὐαγγελιστὴς ἠρκέσθη νὰ μᾶς δώσῃ μίαν σύντομον ἀλλὰ διδακτικωτάτην λεπτομέρειαν: «Καὶ ἦν Ἰωσὴφ καὶ ἡ Μήτηρ αὐτοῦ θαυμάζοντες ἐπὶ τοῖς λεγομένοις περὶ αὐτοῦ. . . . Καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐ συνῆκαν τὸ ῥῆμα ὃ ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς (ὁ Ἰησοῦς). . . . Καὶ ἡ Μήτηρ αὐτοῦ διετήρει πάντα τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς». (Λουκᾶ 2:33,50,51). Ἡ ἀνάμνησις τῶν λεχθέντων κατὰ τὸν Εὐαγγελισμόν, τὰ κατὰ τὴν γέννησιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, αἱ προφητεῖαι τοῦ Συμεών, τὰ λόγια καὶ ἡ ὅλη ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὡδήγησαν σιγὰ-σιγὰ τὴν Παναγίαν νὰ ἀντιληφθῇ ὅτι ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἦτο υἱός της καὶ ὅμως ὄχι δικός της. Ἦτο τὸ «ἐξ αὐτῆς γεννηθὲν ἅγιον», ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ ἐλθὼν εἰς τὸν κόσμον διὰ τὴν σωτηρίαν τοῦ κόσμου. Ἡ Μητέρα ἔπρεπε μόνον ὡς δούλη Κυρίου νὰ ὑπηρετήσῃ τὸ μυστήριον.

Πρὸ τοῦ Σταυροῦ. Τὸν μεγαλύτερον πόνον καὶ τὴν σκληροτέραν δοκιμασίαν ἐδοκίμασεν ἡ Παναγία πρὸ τοῦ Σταυροῦ. Ὁ ἱστορικὸς Λουκᾶς δὲν μᾶς λέγει τίποτε τὸ ἐξυπηρετικὸν διὰ τὴν Θεοτόκον. Ἠρκέσθη νὰ μᾶς πληροφορήσῃ ὅτι ἐστάθησαν «πάντες οἱ γνωστοὶ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ μακρόθεν. . .». (Λουκᾶ 23:49) Μᾶς δίδει ὅμως ὁ Θεολόγος Ἰωάννης τὴν τελευταίαν σκηνήν, ποὺ ἔζησεν ἡ Θεοτόκος πρὸ τοῦ Σταυροῦ. (Ἰωάν. 19:25-27) Τὰ πάντα εἶχον τελειώσει κατὰ τὸ Θεῖον θέλημα. Ὁ Χριστὸς ἀνῆλθεν ἐπὶ τοῦ Σταυροῦ, διὰ νὰ σωθοῦν δι' Αὐτοῦ πάντες οἱ πιστεύοντες εἰς Αὐτόν. (Ἰωάν. 3:16) Τὰ τελευταῖα πρόσωπα, ποὺ ἦσαν τόσο κοντά Του, ἦσαν ἡ ἀγαπητή Του Μητέρα καὶ ὁ ἠγαπημένος μαθητὴς Ἰωάννης. Τότε ὁ Χριστὸς ἐπλήρωσε τὸ τελευταῖον καθῆκον πρὸς τὴν Ἁγίαν Μητέρα. Ἀνέθεσεν αὐτὴν ὑπὸ τὴν προστασίαν τοῦ Ἀποστό-

λου Ἰωάννου μὲ τὰ χαρακτηριστικὰ λόγια: «Γύναι, ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου». Εἰς τὰ λόγια αὐτὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μερικοὶ ἑρμηνευταὶ διαβλέπουν ὅτι ὁ Κύριος ὑποδεικνύει εἰς τὴν Παναγίαν ὅτι Αὐτὸς δὲν εἶναι υἱός της. Ἡ Ὀρθόδοξος ὅμως ψυχή, ποὺ συνέθεσε τόσους καὶ τόσους ὕμνους γύρω ἀπὸ τὸ σύμπλεγμα «Παναγία–Χριστὸς–Σταυρός», ἀνακαλύπτει κάτι τὸ ὑψηλότερον καὶ ἀκριβέστερον, ὅταν εἰς τὸ στόμα τῆς Θεοτόκου θέτῃ τὴν τελευταίαν ὁμολογίαν: «Σὺ ὑπάρχεις ἀληθῶς ὁ Υἱὸς καὶ Θεός μου».

Ἐκεῖ, πρὸ τοῦ Σταυροῦ, ἐγνώρισεν τελικὰ καὶ ἐπίστευσεν ἡ Παναγία εἰς τὸ Θεῖον Μυστήριον, τὸ ὁποῖον ὡς πιστὴ δούλη Κυρίου ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὑπηρέτησεν καὶ διὰ τὸ ὁποῖον τὴν ἐμακάρισαν καὶ θὰ τὴν μακαρίζουν πᾶσαι αἱ γενεαί. (Λουκᾶ 1:45, 48, 11:27-28)

Διὰ τῆς πίστεως, τῆς εὐσεβείας καὶ τῆς ὑπακοῆς της ἡ Παναγία ὑψώθη εἰς ἴνδαλμα, πρὸς τὸ ὁποῖον θὰ προσβλέπῃ μετὰ σεβασμοῦ κάθε χριστιανικὴ ψυχή. Ἀπετέλεσε τὸ καύχημα τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος, διότι εἰς τὸ πρόσωπόν της ἡ ἀνθρωπότης ἔδωσεν ὅ,τι πολυτιμότερον εἶχε πρὸς ἐξυπηρέτησιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τῆς Λυτρώσεως, ἔδωσε τὴν Μητέρα, δι' ἧς ἐνηνθρώπησεν ὁ Λυτρωτής. Ἀνεδείχθη πρότυπον μοναδικόν, ἀπὸ τὸ ὁποῖον θὰ ζητῇ νὰ παραδειγματισθῇ κάθε Χριστιανὸς εἰς τὸν δρόμον τῆς ζωῆς του. Τὸ ἔργον ἑκάστου ἀνθρώπου, οἱονδήποτε καὶ ἂν εἶναι τοῦτο, εἶναι ὑπηρεσία εἰς τὸ Θεῖον θέλημα, μὲ τελικὸν σκοπὸν τὴν σωτηρίαν, τὴν ἕνωσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων μετὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὡς τὴν ἐπόθησεν ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀνὰ τοὺς αἰῶνας. Εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς Θεοτόκου ἔχομεν πλέον τὴν βεβαιότητα, ὅτι θὰ ἐπιτύχωμεν τοῦ ποθητοῦ. Ἀρκεῖ νὰ εἴμεθα πάντοτε ἕτοιμοι νὰ ψιθυρίσωμεν εἰς τὴν Θείαν πρόσκλησιν:

«Ἰδοὺ ὁ δοῦλος σου, Κύριε·
γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα σου».

ΚΥΡΙΑΚΟΔΡΟΜΙΟΝ ΜΗΝΟΣ ΑΥΓΟΥΣΤΟΥ 1956

Ἡμ.	Κυριακὴ	Ἦχος	Ἑωθ.	Ἀπόστολος	Εὐαγγέλιον
5	ΣΤ΄ Ματθαίου	πλ. α΄	ΣΤ΄	Ρωμ. ιβ΄ 6-14	Ματ. θ΄ 1-8
12	Ζ΄ Ματθαίου	πλ. β΄	Ζ΄	Ρωμ. ιε΄ 1-7	Ματ. θ΄ 27-35
19	Η΄ Ματθαίου	βαρὺς	Η΄	Α΄ Κορ. α΄ 10-17	Ματ. ιδ΄ 14-22
26	Θ΄ Ματθαίου	πλ. δ΄	Θ΄	Α΄ Κορ. γ΄ 9-17	Ματ. ιδ΄ 22-34

ΚΥΡΙΑΚΟΔΡΟΜΙΟΝ ΜΗΝΟΣ ΣΕΠΤΕΜΒΡΙΟΥ 1956

Ἡμ.	Κυριακὴ	Ἦχος	Ἑωθ.	Ἀπόστολος	Εὐαγγέλιον
2	Ι΄ Ματθαίου	α΄.	Ι΄.	Α΄ Κορ. δ΄ 9-16	Ματ. ιζ΄ 14-23
9	Πρὸ τῆς Ὑψώσ.	β΄.	ΙΑ΄.	Γαλ. ς΄ 11-18	Ἰων. γ΄ 13-17
16	Μετὰ τὴν Ὕψωσ.	γ΄.	Α΄.	Γαλ. β΄ 16-20	Μάρκ. η΄ 34-θ΄ 1
23	Α΄ Λουκᾶ	δ΄.	Β΄.	Γαλ. δ΄ 22-27	Λουκ. ε΄ 1-11
30	Β΄ Λουκᾶ	πλ. α΄.	Γ΄.	Β΄ Κορ. α΄ 21-β΄ 4	Λουκ. ς΄ 31-36

Προσκύνημα

Χρόνια παλιὰ . . . καθὼς γυρνᾶ ἡ σκέψη πάλι πίσω,
μακρυὰ ἀπὸ τῆς πόλης τὴ βουὴ . . . , κάποια λευκὰ φτερὰ
μὲ ξαναφέρνουν στὴν παλιὰ Ἐκκλησιὰ νὰ προσκυνήσω,
καὶ νὰ ξαναύρω π' ἔχασα μιὰν ἄδολη χαρά!

Σὰν πάντα θὰ προσμένῃ ἐκεῖ μὲ τὸ ἱλαρό του βλέμμα
καὶ μὲ τὰ γένια κάτασπρα ἀπ' τοῦ χρόνου τὴν ὁρμή,
ὁ Παπα-Λιᾶς ποὺ μ' ἔμαθε, ὥρα καλή του, ψέμμα;
πῶς νὰ κερδίζω τίμια στὸν κόσμο τὸ ψωμί.

Ἡ Παναγιά, ἀπὸ ψηλὰ στὸν τοῖχο, θὰ βυθίσῃ
κεῖνο τὸ βλέμμα τ' αὐστηρό, ποὺ φτάνει στὴν καρδιά,
καὶ ἡ ψυχή μου ταπεινὴ σὰν πρῶτα θὰ ριγήσῃ,
ὡς θὰ σκορπιέται γύρω της τῶν ρόδων ἡ εὐωδιά.

Χρόνια παλιὰ . . . καθὼς γυρνᾶ ἡ σκέψη πάλι πίσω,
μακρυὰ ἀπ' τῆς πόλης τὴ βουή . . . , κάποια λευκὰ φτερὰ
μὲ ξαναφέρνουν στὴν παλιὰ Ἐκκλησιὰ νὰ προσκυνήσω,
καὶ νὰ ξαναύρω π' ἔχασα μιὰν ἄδολη χαρά!

Νῖκος Β. Καμβύσης

THE REPOSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

By THE VERY REV. EUSEBIUS A. STEPHANOU, Th.D.
Brookline, Mass.

AUGUST brings with it a deep feeling of intensified reverence. To the Orthodox Christian it is a sacred month. The word itself even connotes the venerable character of this month. August is the month of the Blessed Virgin Theotokos, because on the 15th the Orthodox Church observes the most solemn of Feasts related to the Mother of God, namely, her repose or dormition. In Greek it is known as Κοίμησις, which means "falling asleep" (incorrectly referred to as the "Assumption"). If every death is but a deep slumber for Christian believers and not an end of life, then so much more is the death of the Blessed Virgin but a deep sleep. Just before the Lord had raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead, He remarked, "She is not dead; she sleepeth." Christ revealed to us that death is no extinction of life but a temporary separation of soul and body. It is the flight of the soul to the spiritual abode of the departed. The appearance of death is deceptive. The dead are silent and motionless as those who sleep. Hence the characteristic expression often used in liturgical language today and in more earlier times heard among Christians in reference to the dead: "fallen asleep in the Lord."

It is not the birth but rather the death of saints that the Church celebrates in a spirit of rejoicing and with special observances, because death is the real birth for the Christian. It is the entry into the real sphere of existence, namely, eternal and incorruptible life. And so it is for this reason that the Repose of the Theotokos marks a joyful feast on the Church calendar. If the commemoration of the death of any saint is an occasion for spiritual rejoicing, then so much more is the Repose of the Blessed Virgin Mary a joyful feast, since she represents the summit of human holiness and purity and as such is the object of special veneration.

We would do well at this season of the year to pause and to consider for a moment why, as Orthodox Christians, we regard her above all the saints of God as "more honorable than the Seraphim and more glorious than the Cherubim." It should be remembered that Mary, the Virgin of Nazareth, became the chosen vessel of God and the means whereby Divine Love was to undo the transgression of Eve. By woman sin and death entered into the world and by woman God willed to redeem the fallen nature of man. That the Redeemer would be born of woman is foretold just before the progenitors of the human race were banished from Paradise. "And I will put enmity between thee [the serpent] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy heel and thou shalt bruise his heel." (*Gen.* 3: 15).

When the fulness of time had come the Lord singled out Mary of Nazareth of the race of David as "blessed among women" and as the maiden who was to serve as the Mother of the Savior Jesus Christ. She was bestowed with the honor of conceiving within her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit the incarnate Son of God. The infinite and eternal logos assumed the nature of man by taking flesh from the immaculate body of the Virgin. Being full of grace she brought forth the fulness of the Godhead in swaddling clothes. In her womb was performed the mystery which no finite mind can fathom, but can only adore. God became flesh. Divine nature which the whole universe is unable to contain becomes contained in the womb of the Theotokos.

Thus she became the instrument of the infinite loving kindness of God "who desired not the death of the sinner but that he should return and live." In her the divine and human meet. Heaven and earth unite in her womb, the gulf between the infinite and finite, the eternal and the temporal is bridged. By her humble submission to divine counsel, she proves herself as the new Eve who lifts the curse of sin and death which the Eve of old had incurred by her disobedience. In the words of St. Irenaeus, "As the human race fell into the bondage of death by means of a virgin so it is rescued by a virgin; virginal disobedience having been balanced in the opposite scale by virginal obedience." Whereas the old Adam had brought forth the old Eve now the new Adam comes forth from the new Eve. It was from the Theotokos that the salvation of man had sprung, for out of her womb came the God-man who offered Himself as a ransom for many.

During this sacred season all Orthodox faithful turn with fervent devotion to the All Holy Mother of God. To the Queen of Heaven and earth our spirits, purified by fasting and mortification, joyfully rise to render unto her proper honor and to praise the splendor of her holiness. "All creation rejoices upon thee, O ye full of grace." In Orthodox countries, as in Greece, for example, the atmosphere is full of incense and the fields and mountains seem to give off a mystical fragrance from the sanctification of her abiding presence. The country side is dotted by chapels erected to her honor.

Though honored by the indwelling of the only immortal One, the Theotokos could not avoid the taste of death from which not even her Son was spared. She who bore the source of life was to succumb to the law of death. Though the bearer of life, she had to submit to the inevitable from which no mortal can escape. And so

in the village of Gethsemane the Apostles of the Lord gathered to behold the strange happening which the Church at this time observes. Surrounded by the company of the Twelve who had known the comfort of her presence, the Theotokos gave up her spirit to her Beloved Son.

"O, a strange miracle! The source of life is laid in a tomb!" Thus the Church chants and extols the wonder of the event. She who brought forth the fountainspring of life lies dead and lifeless in the grave. The mother of life, the tabernacle of the glory of God, follows the course of all mortal men.

But her "grave becomes the ladder leading to Heaven," because her death is the beginning of our life. Her death means her exaltation and glorious entry into the heavenly abode. Far above the angelic orders she is glorified by her Son and at His right hand she is enthroned. The unwedded bride of Nazareth inherits the glory of divine majesty. More than any other mortal, the Blessed Virgin tasted the sweetness of Heaven. She had given her all to Him upon earth and now in turn He grants to her, in filial obligation, the bliss of His heavenly abode.

Herein lies the reason for the joyful character of the Feast. In being lifted from the earth, she did not abandon the race of men. Rather, her departure from this world means her closeness to us. It is to our benefit that she leaves. She leaves only to be near us, near in spirit and in a true sense of fellowship. At the right hand of God's throne she intercedes for our welfare. She is forever vigilant in mediating to her Son for our salvation. It is for this reason that all those who dwell under bodily or spiritual misery turn to the Mother of God in hope. In her love and tenderness she is always prepared to respond to our prayers and to intercede to the health, safety and salvation of those in need. In all our devotions, both private and corporate, we Orthodox frequently invoke the prayers of the Theotokos. "All-holy Theotokos, save us," is a common supplication in Orthodox worship.

If all the saints who have departed this life in faith and who inhabit the Church Triumphant maintain their unity with those in the Church Militant upon earth in the "Communion of the Saints," so much truer is the Theotokos united with those who still fight the fight of faith still dwelling in their earthly tabernacle. Each time the Divine Liturgy is celebrated upon the altar, the bloodless offering is made in commemoration "especially of the all-holy, immaculate, all-blessed, all glorious, Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary."

It is regrettable that many American-born Orthodox lose sight of the place of the Theotokos in the piety of the Church. Perhaps, it is due generally to the religious illiteracy so prevalent among our younger people or even to the influence of Protestantism, which, in reaction to Roman Catholic extremes, has shown disregard and aversion to the Blessed Virgin. If Orthodoxy is to remain intact, we must do our utmost to preserve the sacred tradition regarding the veneration due the Theotokos and her holy icons. Without entering into a theological discussion, let it suffice to say that to reject all honor due to the Theotokos is a Protestant impiety which is repulsive to Orthodox spirituality. It is inconceivable that we should adore Christ while dishonoring His holy mother. How can we honor the fruit without honoring the tree which bears the fruit! On the other hand, the Orthodox Church equally condemns all distorted doctrines regarding the Blessed Virgin which have found their way into the Roman Church, as, for example, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the dogmatized formulation of her bodily assumption. In Orthodoxy the devotion to the Theotokos has no need of definitions cast in dogmatic forms. As members of the Orthodox Church, we must stand vigilant against the errors of both Protestantism and Papal Romanism, and adhere tenaciously to and practise faithfully the genuine piety of Orthodoxy with respect to the Blessed Virgin.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SEMINAR JULY, 1956

(Continued from page 183)

done nothing but talk of the most profitable vacation of my life. I am certain that, by now, my family is thoroughly convinced of the generosity, kindness, consideration, competency and truly *Christian* spirit prevalent at St. Basil's. These last remarks are in reference to *all* the people that make up the Academy. I am deeply indebted to each and everyone of you. I tend to be very quiet in my expressions, but my keen observations have convinced me that the Greeks are to be held in esteem and honored by all. . . .

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Μοναχοῦ Θεοκλήτου Διονυσιάτου, ΜΕΤΑΞΥ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΓΗΣ (Ἁγιορειτικὸς Μοναχισμός). Athens: Astir Publishing House, 1956. Paper. Pp. 144. Frontispiece and 3 colored plates. Illustrated.

Between Heaven and Earth (Holy Mount Monasticism) is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable, most convincing, and most creative works ever to come out of the Christian East. It is richly illustrated by the artists Photios Kontoglou and Ralles Kopsides and was written by the Mount Athos Monk Theokletos Dionysiatos at the request of his abbot, Archimandrite Gabriel, as a sort of *Apologia pro Vita Monastica.* It is actually much more than that. Written in beautiful Greek, in the form of a dramatic dialogue (and in certain respects more interesting than the Platonic prototype), this unusual work has for its scene a monastery on Mount Athos where vivid discussions take place concerning Byzantine monasticism as developed in its most famous setting of Mount Athos. The principal persons of the dialogue are a monastic narrator, the Geron Theoleptos, the monk Chrysostomos, a theologian (a layman), a lawyer, an Eremites, a novice monk, Nikolaos, and an abbot, Archimandrite Eusebios.

The subject of the dialogue is Byzantine monasticism on Mount Athos, what its religious historical foundations are, what are its history and development, and what were and are the ultimate arguments for the existence of monasticism as a religious institution.

In very brilliant and very interesting fashion, the dialogue carries us through such topics as the difference between secular and monastic beliefs, the Monk and God, physical beauty and spiritual beauty, the formulation of a definition of Faith, monasticism and society, an interpretation of the history of monasticism on Mount Athos in relation to history, the meaning of Mount Athos, the relation between the monasticism of Mount Athos and the monasticism of the Church of the earliest ages, a detailed discussion of Dionysius the Areopagite, his works, their genuineness and relation to Eastern mysticism and Neoplatonism, monasticism and mysticism, a discussion of mysticism with emphasis on the fourteenth century, the century of Eastern mysticism *par excellence.*

This work is a carefuly worked out justification of the history and development of Mount Athos. For our author, Athos is "the limitless reality with very deeply religious content and with a life so much nonmaterial that with difficulty does one make out that he lives on earth. Athos means an ideal, a spiritual life, it means a workshop of souls with absorption from Heaven." (p. 64) It is the monk who is "between Heaven and earth." (p. 28)

Furthermore, says Monk Theokletos, "Religion without monasticism is inconceivable, inasmuch as monasticism constitutes its [religion's] aristocracy, its zealots, those dedicated to it." (p. 66)

Monasticism, our author relates to us, in a very powerful summary: (1) originates from the life of Christianity; (2) is consistent with the teaching of Christ; (3) is found in the spirit of all the Church Fathers by whom it was considered worthy of special attention and systematization; (4) is recommended spontaneously by the physiology of the repentant, storm-tossed, and loving soul; (5) comprises a manner of spiritual life and a means for the achievement of Christian perfection; (6) its mission we are able to comprehend within the folds of the Church. Monasticism, by constituting a special class of the Church, devotes most of its time in prayer on behalf of itself, on behalf of the entire Church, on behalf of "every afflicted and fatigued soul," on behalf of those who never pray. (p. 70)

Our monk goes on to tell us that monasticism is justified because it struggles for its own and its brethren's benefit. It is continuously engaged in prayer for the world. It contributes a strong element to the Church and makes sick men whole. Monasticism it is that makes saints who affect the course of history through prayers. (p. 70)

This work does a beautiful job of presenting the history and development of Eastern monasticism from the fourth to the fourteenth century A.D., and from the fourteenth century to the present day, not in the form of a sterile scholarly work, but in the form of a lively dramatic dialogue which captures the reader's attention and manages to convey some of the religious mysticism which it so brilliantly describes. It provides the reader with a very penetrating analysis of the function and purpose of Eastern Orthodox monasticism in no uncertain terms and is, I think, an admirable exposition of the institution of Eastern Christian monasticism as exemplified to the world on the Holy Mount.

JOHN E. REXINE
Brandeis University

THE WATERS OF MARAH. By Peter Hammond. New York: MacMillan, 1956. Pp. 186. $4.75.

Mr. Hammond has presented two books in one. While in Greece, he visited many dioceses and kept an excellent diary of the talks he had and the people he met. This travelogue includes many details of the religious life of Greek Orthodox clergy and laymen that, up until now, were known by many but never presented in English. In addition, he quotes from the books of many English writers who had written their impressions of the Eastern Church. As a result, the Church of one and two hundred years ago is described in the same breath with his own impression of present day Greece. Throughout the book comparisons are made between the Greek Orthodox Church and the Church of England for the benefit of the Anglican reading public. A scholarly piece of work or even a popular work that intermingles personal opinions with opinions of others certainly calls for a bibliography. There is no bibliography here. The names of the authors quoted are mentioned in the Index, but there is no way of knowing what books are used. In many cases the author gives us his personal recollections of the places visited and authors cited.

An inevitable outcome of the mingling of past impressions by other writers with the author's personal impressions is the presentation of past teachings and past usages with present day practices. The cover itself is misleading — the subtitle, "the present State of the Greek Church," is over the picture of Rev. Father Constantine Photis, for whom an entire chapter is set aside.

The entire book does offer, in a fairly easy style, a great deal of information about the religious movements of Greece — information that isn't found elsewhere. The founding of the "ZOE" Brotherhood and other organizations. All in all, a highly informative book but interspersed with personal opinions.

ΕΤΟΣ ΚΒ΄ Ο ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΠΑΡΑΤΗΡΗΤΗΣ ΑΡΙΘ. 437

ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ

Ἑορτὴ Κοιμήσεως Θεοτόκου

Ἐπὶ τῇ εὐκαιρίᾳ τῆς ἑορτῆς τῆς Κοιμήσεως τῆς Θεοτόκου ἡ Ἱερὰ Ἀρχιεπισκοπὴ ἀπέλυσεν ἐγκύκλιον, εἰς τὴν ὁποίαν λέγεται ὅτι ἀνέκαθεν ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ Ὀρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ἀπέδιδεν μεγάλην σημασίαν εἰς τὸ δεκαπενταύγουστον, διότι τοῦτο μᾶς ὁδηγεῖ καὶ καταντᾷ εἰς τὴν λαμπροτέραν καὶ ἐνδοξοτέραν ἑορτὴν τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου, τὴν Κοίμησιν αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν εἰς Οὐρανοὺς μετάστασιν. Προσκαλεῖ δὲ ἡ Ἐκκλησία τὰ τέκνα της, ὅπως κατὰ τὴν περίοδον αὐτὴν ἀποδείξουν τὴν τιμήν των καὶ τὸν σεβασμόν των πρὸς τὴν Ὑπεραγίαν Θεοτόκον διὰ νηστείας καὶ προσευχῆς.

Διὰ τῆς ἀποφυγῆς ὡρισμένων φαγητῶν καὶ τῆς πνευματικῆς ἐγκρατείας καὶ τῆς ψυχικῆς πειθαρχίας καὶ διὰ προσευχῆς, διὰ τῆς τακτῆς δηλονότι παρακολουθήσεως τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀκολουθίας τῆς Παρακλήσεως τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου, τὰ τροπάρια τῆς ὁποίας εἶναι, ὡς τόσαι ἄλλαι κατανυκτικαὶ προσευχαί, τόσον δημοφιλῆ μεταξὺ τῶν Ἑλληνορθοδόξων, ὥστε πολλοὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν νὰ γνωρίζουν αὐτὰ ἐκ στήθους.

Προτρέπονται ἐν συνεχείᾳ οἱ Αἰδεσιμώτατοι ἱερεῖς, ὅπως καθ' ἑκάστην ἑσπέραν τελοῦν τὴν Παράκλησιν τῆς Θεοτόκου καὶ μάλιστα εἰς ὥρας τοιαύτας, ὥστε νὰ δύνανται ἅπαντες οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι νὰ μετέχουν αὐτῆς.

13η Κληρικολαϊκὴ

Τὰ Ἐντιμότατα Διοικητικὰ Συμβούλια τῶν Ἱερῶν Ναῶν τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς παρακαλοῦνται, ὅπως τὸ ταχύτερον δυνατὸν ἀνακοινώσουν εἰς τὴν ὀργανωτικὴν ἐπιτροπὴν τῆς XIII Κληρικολαϊκῆς ἐν Οὐασιγκτῶνι τὰ ὀνόματα τῶν ἀντιπροσώπων των καὶ νὰ ὑποβάλουν ἀντίγραφον εἰς τὴν Ἱερὰν Ἀρχιεπισκοπήν. Τῆς ἐπιτροπῆς προεδρεύει ὁ δικηγόρος κ. Λούης Μανιάτης (Ἱερὸς Ναὸς Ἁγίας Σοφίας, Washington, D. C.)

ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ

Εἰς τὴν τελευταίαν συνεδρίασιν τῆς Ἐφορείας τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς διωρίσθη ὡς Κοσμήτωρ αὐτῆς ὁ Αἰδεσιμολογιώτατος Ἰωάννης Παπαδόπουλος, τέως Ἱερατικὸς Προϊστάμενος τοῦ Ἱεροῦ Ναοῦ τῆς Μεταμορφώσεως Lowell, Mass., καὶ καθηγητὴς τῆς Συστηματικῆς Θεολογίας τῆς ἐν λόγῳ Σχολῆς.

Οὕτως, ὁ μὲν Θεοφιλ. Ἐπίσκοπος Ἐλαίας παραμένει ὡς Σχολάρχης τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς, ὁ Αἰδεσ. Ἰωάννης Παπαδόπουλος ὡς Κοσμήτωρ, βοηθὸς τοῦ Σχολάρχου εἰς τὴν Διεύθυνσιν τῆς Σχολῆς, καὶ ὁ Πανοσιολ. Ἀρχιμανδρίτης Εὐσέβιος Παπαστεφάνου παραμένει εἰς τὴν θέσιν τοῦ Ὑποδιευθυντοῦ.

Εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν ὡς ἄνω συνεδρίασιν διωρίσθη ὡς καθηγητὴς τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς ὁ διδάκτωρ τῆς Θεολογίας κ. Σδράκας.

ΣΤ΄ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑ

Συνέδριον Κλήρου, Φιλοπτώχων καὶ Κατηχητριῶν

Ὑπὸ τὴν αἰγίδα τῆς ΣΤ΄ Ἐπισκοπικῆς Περιφερείας συνεκροτήθη εἰς Pittsburgh, Pa., τὸ πρῶτον κοινὸν Συνέδριον τοῦ Κλήρου, τῶν Φιλοπτώχων καὶ τῶν Κατηχητριῶν τῆς Περιφερείας ἀπὸ τῆς 5ης μέχρι 8ης Ἰουλίου.

Τόσον ἡ ὀργάνωσις ὅσον καὶ ἡ διεξαγωγὴ τῶν ἐργασιῶν τοῦ Συνεδρίου ἦτο ἀπολύτως ἐπιτυχής. Παρέστησαν ὅλοι σχεδὸν οἱ Ἱερεῖς τῆς Περιφερείας, ἐπαρκεῖς ἀντιπροσωπεῖαι τῶν Φιλοπτώχων Τμημάτων καὶ δεκάδες κατηχητῶν καὶ κατηχητριῶν ἐκ τῶν Κοινοτήτων τῆς Περιφερείας.

Ψυχὴ τοῦ Συνεδρίου ὑπῆρξεν ὁ Θεοφιλέστατος Ἐπίσκοπος Τροπαίου κ. Πολύευκτος, εἰς τὴν πρωτοβουλίαν τοῦ ὁποίου ὠφείλετο ἡ σύγκλησίς του.

Μία τῶν ἰδιαιτέρως ἐνδιαφερουσῶν ἀποφάσεων τοῦ Συνεδρίου ὑπῆρξεν ἡ ὀργάνωσις τῶν Φιλοπτώχων Τμημάτων τῆς Περιφερείας εἰς Federation. Ταύτης πρώτη Πρόεδρος ἐξελέγη ἡ γνωστὴ διὰ τὴν δραστηριότητα καὶ τὰς πολλαπλᾶς ἱκανότητάς της κυρία Ἐλπὶς Λιακάκου ἐκ Wheeling, W. Va., ἡ ὁποία ὑπῆρξεν Πρόεδρος τῆς Ὀργανωτικῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς καὶ general chairman τοῦ Συνεδρίου.

Κατὰ τὰς ἀρχαιρεσίας τοῦ Ἱερατικοῦ Συνδέσμου τῆς Περιφερείας, Πρόεδρος ἐξελέγη ὁ αἰδεσιμώτατος Μιχαὴλ Βαπόρης τῆς Κοινότητος τοῦ «Τιμίου Σταυροῦ», Pittsburgh, Pa.

Εἰς τὸ Συνέδριον κληθεὶς παρέστη καὶ ὁ Διευθυντὴς τοῦ Τμήματος Κατηχητικῶν Σχολείων τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς κ. Ξεν. Διαμαντόπουλος.

ΔΙΟΡΘΩΣΙΣ

Εἰς τὸ προηγούμενον τεῦχος ἐδημοσιεύθη ὑπὸ τὸν τίτλον «Γαμήλιον Ἐμβατήριον», ἄσμα τοῦ ἀειμνήστου Ἐπισκόπου Ἁγίου Φραγκίσκου κ. Εἰρηναίου Τσουρουνάκη μὲ τὴν σύστασιν νὰ ψάλλεται κατὰ τὴν εἴσοδον τῆς νύμφης καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ συνήθους «Δεῦρο Καλή, Δεῦρο Ἀγνή». Σχετικῶς μὲ τὸ ἄσμα τοῦτο ἐγράφη κακῶς ὅτι συνιστᾶται ὑπὸ τοῦ Γραφείου Πληροφοριῶν τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς. Εἰς τοιαύτας περιπτώσεις ἡ Ἀρχιεπισκοπὴ δὲν συνιστᾶ νὰ ψάλλεται οὐδὲν ἄλλο πέραν τῶν προβλεπομένων ὑπὸ τοῦ Τυπικοῦ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας.

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Ὑπὸ ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ Δ. ΠΑΛΛΗ

Πῶς νὰ δοκιμάζωμεν πάντοτε χαρὰν καὶ ἀληθινὴν εὐτυχίαν

Θέλομεν νὰ δοκιμάζωμεν πάντοτε χαράν; Ἕνα εἶναι τὸ μέσον: νὰ εὑρισκόμεθα εἰς εἰρηνικὰς σχέσεις μὲ τὸν Θεόν, νὰ ζῶμεν ἁρμονικὰ μὲ τὸν Βασιλέα τῶν Οὐρανῶν. Καὶ θὰ γίνῃ τοῦτο, ἂν Τοῦ εἴμεθα ἀφωσιωμένοι, **ἐντελῶς ἰδικοί Του,** ὅταν θέλωμεν αὐτό, ποὺ θέλει Αὐτός, ὅταν κάμνωμεν αὐτό, ποὺ παραγγέλλει Ἐκεῖνος, ὅταν ἀκολουθήσωμεν τὸν δρόμον, ποὺ ἐχάραξε μὲ τὸν Νόμον Του καὶ μὲ τὰς ἐντολάς Του.

Ἂν τὸ φῶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἴχαμε ὁδηγόν μας

Ἂν εἴχαμε ὡς ὁδηγόν μας τὸ φῶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ, θὰ ἐβαδίζαμε χωρὶς προσκόμματα στὴν ζωή μας, θὰ ἀκολουθούσαμε τὸν δρόμον τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ τοῦ καθήκοντος. Καὶ τότε θὰ ἐζούσαμε μιὰ ζωὴ ἥσυχη, εἰρηνική, εὐχάριστη, χωρὶς μίση καὶ ἔχθρες, χωρὶς μαλώματα καὶ ἀλληλοσκοτωμούς.

Τὸ κέρδος τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς καὶ μακαριότητος

Τί ἀξίαν ἔχουν αἱ μεγαλύτεραι ἐπιτυχίαι τοῦ κόσμου, τὰ μεγαλύτερα πλούτη τῆς γῆς ἐμπρὸς εἰς τὸ κέρδος τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς καὶ μακαριότητος; Καὶ ἀξίζει χάριν προσωρινῶν καὶ τιποτένιων ἀπολαύσεων νὰ θυσιάσῃ κανεὶς τὸ κέρδος αὐτό; «Τί ὠφελεῖται ὁ ἄνθρωπος — διεκήρυξεν ὁ Κύριος — ἐὰν κερδίσῃ τὸν κόσμον ὅλον καὶ χάσῃ τὴν ψυχήν του;»

Αὐτὴν ἂν χάσωμεν, ἐχάσαμεν τὸ πᾶν. Αὐτὴν ἂν κερδήσωμεν, ἐκερδήσαμεν τὸ πᾶν.

Ἡ Χριστιανικὴ Οἰκογένεια εἶναι ἐπίγειος παράδεισος

Ἡ Χριστιανικὴ οἰκογένεια εἶναι, χωρὶς καμμίαν ἀμφιβολίαν, ἐπίγειος παράδεισος. Μέσα σ' αὐτὴν βασιλεύει ἡ ὁμόνοια, ἡ ἁρμονία καὶ ἡ γαλήνη. Οἱ γονεῖς ποτὲ δὲν φιλονεικοῦν, ποτὲ δὲν μαλώνουν. Τὰ παιδιὰ ποτὲ δὲν τοὺς πικραίνουν καὶ μεταξύ των συνδέονται μὲ ἀγάπην πραγματικήν.

Ἡ οἰκογένεια αὐτή, ποὺ κατοικεῖ ὁ Χριστός, εἶναι Ναός, ἀπὸ τὸν ὁποῖον βγαίνουν προσευχαὶ καὶ ὕμνοι καὶ δοξολογίαι πρὸς τὸν Βασιλέα τῶν Οὐρανῶν.

Εὐτυχισμέναι αἱ κοινωνίαι, ποὺ εἶναι εἰς θέσιν νὰ ἐπιδείξουν καὶ τέτοιους Ναούς.

Ποῖος εἶναι πραγματικῶς μεγάλος

Ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς διδάσκει, ὅτι μεγάλος καὶ σπουδαῖος εἶναι ὄχι ὁ πλούσιος, οὔτε ὁ ἰσχυρός, ἀλλὰ ἐκεῖνος, ποὺ ὑπηρετεῖ τοὺς ἄλλους καὶ τοὺς βοηθεῖ εἰς κάθε ἀνάγκην των καὶ θυσιάζεται χάριν αὐτῶν. Διότι ἔτσι ἀποδεικνύει ὅτι ἔχει μέσα εἰς τὴν ψυχήν του τὴν Χριστιανικὴν ἀγάπην. Καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτὴ τὸν κάμνει ὅμοιον μὲ τὸν Θεόν. Τί δὲ εἶναι ὁ Θεός; Ἡ πηγὴ κάθε δόξης, τιμῆς καὶ μεγαλείου. Ἑπομένως, ὅποιος ἀγαπᾷ τὸν πλησίον του καὶ θυσιάζεται ἐν ἀνάγκῃ γι' αὐτόν, ἀνεβαίνει εἰς μεγάλο ὕψος δόξης καὶ τιμῆς, εἶναι πραγματικῶς μεγάλος.

ΤΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΕΙΟΝ "Ο ΚΟΣΜΟΣ"

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